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Batman & Robin (1997)
 a recap by [Albert Walker](#)
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The Cast of Characters:



Batman (George Clooney). Real name: Bruce



Wayne. Millionaire playboy who fights crime by night. Pushing forty, yet still unmarried and living all alone with a guy in his twenties. I'm not implying anything here, I'm just saying.



Robin (Chris O'Donnell). Real name: Dick Grayson. Former carnival trapeze artist who's now Batman's youthful crime-fighting sidekick. Has a chip on his shoulder about the size of Joe Don Baker.



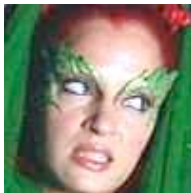
Alfred Pennyworth (Michael Gough). Batman and Robin's English butler. In this film, he's dying of a Movie Illness that seriously impairs his ability to pick secure passwords.



Batgirl (Alicia Silverstone). Real name: Barbara Wilson. Pointlessly changed from the comics to be Alfred's niece here. Proof that a weight problem is no obstacle to becoming a superhero.



Mr. Freeze (Arnold Schwarzenegger). Real name: Dr. Victor Fries. Forced by fate to wander around town in a clunky aluminum suit. Develops a poorly thought out plan to cure his wife's Movie Illness by freezing the entire city.



Poison Ivy (Uma Thurman). Real name: Pamela Isley. A Greenpeace reject who gets infused with plant toxins that compel her to constantly toss out smutty one-liners. (Imagine Mae West reincarnated as a carrot.)

A word of warning before we begin: Even for me, this is going to be an exhaustingly long article. But you can't really expect any less for what could be the stupidest movie of the last ten years. *Batman & Robin* is the very epitome of the big, dumb, and loud action film that has plagued audiences in recent years.

It's hard to think of a film that is more actively disliked than this one. It's not the worst movie ever made, far from it, and in fact it ended up as one of the highest-grossing films of 1997. (It's not even the worst Batman-related movie ever; that honor is split between *Alyas Batman en Robin* and [The Wild, Wild World of Batwoman](#).)

But *Batman & Robin* is easily one of the most reviled movies ever made. I defy you to find a single positive review of this movie anywhere, by any critic. In 1999, readers of the UK magazines *SFX* and *Comics International* voted this the worst comic book adaptation ever made (beating out [Howard the Duck](#) [!]). And in 2001, the editors of *Maxim* magazine (okay, so they're not the Medveds, but they're still a pretty accurate barometer of the opinions of the general male populace) voted this the *worst movie of all time*.

Why is this film so hated? If it were about any other character besides Batman, I doubt we'd even be having this discussion. Batman is behind only Superman as the most enduring and beloved comic book character ever created, and a lot of this has to do with the unique nature of the character. Batman was the first costumed superhero who didn't get his powers because he came from another planet, had chemicals spilled on him, or got exposed to atomic radiation. As Conan O'Brien once joked, Batman's only superpower is that he goes to the gym a lot.

Essentially, Batman is one of the few costumed crimefighters who *chooses* to be a superhero. And in the sixty-plus years since his first appearance, a great number of comic book creators have devoted a lot of ink to exploring his motivations. Take the tragedy that drives Batman, and couple it with the sinister bat imagery he utilizes, and the stage is set for a limitless number of dark, Gothic stories that examine issues of justice, revenge, and vigilantism in the seedy underbelly of the big city.

Until the late 80's, however, no filmed entertainment ever bothered to seriously investigate this aspect of the character. For years, Batman was pretty much stuck in the *Bamm! Pow! Oof!* mode made popular by the 60's [Adam West TV show](#). Like many others, I find the TV show entertaining in spite of itself. It's fun to watch even though it gives serious comic book fans every reason to hate it. So when Tim Burton was tapped to finally update Batman for a feature film, those same fans eagerly hoped that the Dark Knight would finally get the faithful, serious adaptation he deserved.

Was it faithful? More or less. Was it serious? Not really. It had plot holes you could drive the huge new and improved Batmobile through, and it devoted very little time to understanding the character or his motivations. But it did have amazing visual design, strong performances by both Michael Keaton and Jack Nicholson, and a plot that at least attempted to be semi-coherent.

A couple of years later, Tim Burton directed the solid follow-up *Batman Returns*, which remains one the few sequels that actually improved upon the original. Unfortunately, after this movie Tim Burton and Michael Keaton both walked away and Burton handed over the reins to Joel Schumacher. From there, it was a short, obnoxious trip to the total self-destruction of the franchise.

Joel Schumacher started his feature film directing career ignominiously with the alleged comedy *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* with Lily Tomlin, and soon followed it up with the even more insubstantial *D.C. Cab* starring Mr. T. These films should have served as an important lesson: Schumacher can't direct comedy. Unfortunately, that's exactly the direction in which he planned to take the Batman franchise.

The first installment that Schumacher directed was *Batman Forever* (which is possibly the dopi-est title of any superhero movie since *Rat P-fink a Boo Boo*). The film didn't quite succeed in its attempts to be humorous, but at least it featured an actual comic actor, Jim Carrey, and action sequences that at the very least attempted to play by the rules of physics. No doubt this was due in large part to the oversight of Tim Burton as a producer.

By the time *Batman & Robin* rolled around, however, Burton had moved on. Left to his own devices, Schumacher quickly tossed any notion of doing a serious portrayal of the Dark Knight in the trash. Apparently, out of that same dumpster, Schumacher scrounged up a whole batch of smirky one-liners, ludicrous stunts, and sound effects that appeared designed to test the upper limits of theater THX sound systems.

I would say that by this point, the Batman franchise had been reduced to the level of the

campy 60's Adam West TV series, but that would be an insult to Adam West.

Schumacher doesn't get sole credit for this sabotage, however. A large part of the blame also goes to screenwriter Akiva Goldsman, and his appearance here means that the Agony Booth finally has its very first **Repeat Offender**. Goldsman is also represented on this site for his equally vapid and disjointed script for [Lost in Space](#). And as *that* movie proved, he writes comedy about as well as Schumacher directs it.

So, put together a director that can't direct comedy, and a writer who can't write comedy, and what kind of Batman movie do they come up with? That's right, a big, glorified, slapstick comedy.

Making matters worse was the paint-by-numbers formula that arose when it came to providing Batman with villains. After the obligatory appearance of the Joker in the first film, *Batman Returns* introduced us to two villains, Catwoman and the Penguin. *Batman Forever* picked up on this formula and provided us with two more villains, the Riddler and Two Face. So, after only three films, they had exhausted the supply of really famous Batman villains.

This means that for this film, we're left with two of the most marginal Batman villains of all time: Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy. One would expect that if the franchise had continued on in this way, the next movie would have featured Batman facing off against the Mad Hatter and King Tut. Surely, it's hard to imagine that being much worse than the movie we actually got.

The film opens with the Warner Brothers logo getting frosty, and then CGI-morphing into an icy Bat Logo. This morphing is completely gratuitous and is obviously a new toy that the filmmakers are planning to use and abuse as much as humanly possible. This lets most in the audience know that they're probably in trouble.

Then, the credit "A Joel Schumacher film" appears, and now we're *certain* we're in trouble. The icy Bat Logo cracks and the pieces fly apart, revealing a misty red backdrop as all the credits fly into the frame. And when I say they "fly into the frame", I mean they come loudly whooshing past us like the Concorde taking off about ten feet away from your head. This means that things are already big, dumb, and loud, and we're not even thirty seconds into the movie yet.

Out of the crimson mist emerge two dark, computer-generated shapes, which turn out to be the Bat Logo and the Robin Logo winging around. They circle each other, then slam together, making a sound not unlike a shotgun going off directly under your seat. Finally, both logos fly away and reveal the title, which of course explodes into a blinding supernova of light. You know, I never thought I'd see the day when the zooming blue credits of *Superman: The Movie* looked tasteful and subdued by comparison.

The credits end, and immediately we get pointless extreme close-ups of various parts of Batman and Robin's bodies as they suit up. We zoom in on black latex gloves being slipped on, black latex belts being buckled, and, gratuitously, we even zoom in on both of their rear ends as they pull up their black latex underoos.





I don't know what fetish Joel Schumacher has here, but I'd rather just not think about it.

Being forced to take a hard look at these costumes only reminds me that they're the one thing I've hated most about the Batman movies (even the good ones). In the comics, Batman and Robin just wore tights, but here for some reason they have to wear these totally artificial, sculpted suits that even have nipples [!] on them. What was so wrong with tights? Christopher Reeve got buff so he could play a superhero, why couldn't George Clooney and Chris O'Donnell?

After a lengthy sequence of the two of them grabbing random weaponry shaped like the Bat and Robin Logos, we at long last see the Batcave. In the center of this vast chamber, the Batmobile is rising up out of some pointless dry ice fog on a hydraulic pedestal as laser lights shoot everywhere. Why is the Batmobile kept on a hydraulic pedestal? You see, this is a Comic Book Movie, therefore nothing needs to make sense. Or so the filmmakers would have us believe.

The Batmobile, as per what we expect from the previous three movies, is a vehicle based upon a completely impractical design. It's got huge bat-shaped fins that achieve absolutely no effect, aerodynamic, dramatic or otherwise. Also, in the nose of the car, a Bat Logo is cut out in clear plastic, revealing some kind of disco strobe light that flashes orange and yellow. I can't even begin to imagine what purpose this would serve.

Eventually, Robin utters the first line of dialogue in the movie, and fittingly, it's also one of the stupidest. "I want a car!" he says eagerly. Batman gives him a grumpy look, but Robin continues: "Chicks dig the car!" Granted, this is something a typical twenty-something might actually say, but on the other hand, we don't expect a typical twenty-something to fight crime as the sworn protector of a huge city.

Batman is then given an ever dumber line of dialogue when he turns to the camera [!] and says, "This is why Superman works alone." Oh, *geez*. *Double* geez.

First of all, nothing in the previous three Batman films even *remotely* hinted at the existence of other superheroes in this "world", let alone Superman. In fact, the events of those films would seem to indicate that Batman and Robin are the only superheroes there are. After all, you didn't see Green Lantern or the Flash stopping by when the Riddler was sucking out everybody's brains in *Batman Forever*. You'd think at least they'd have been like what's up, can you handle this, Batman? Okay, I can see you're all over it, my bad.

So this line not only contradicts *this* film's internal logic, but that of the three previous films, as well. Obviously, it was thrown in without much thought for the sole purpose of getting a cheap laugh, but it didn't even accomplish that much.





Perhaps he thinks that when criminals see him coming, they'll stop running away and instead do the Hustle.

Batman hops into the Batmobile, and an overhead shot reveals that the hydraulic pedestal it's sitting on is shaped like the Bat Logo. Dude, we know you're Batman, okay? You don't have to shape every single thing you own like a bat.

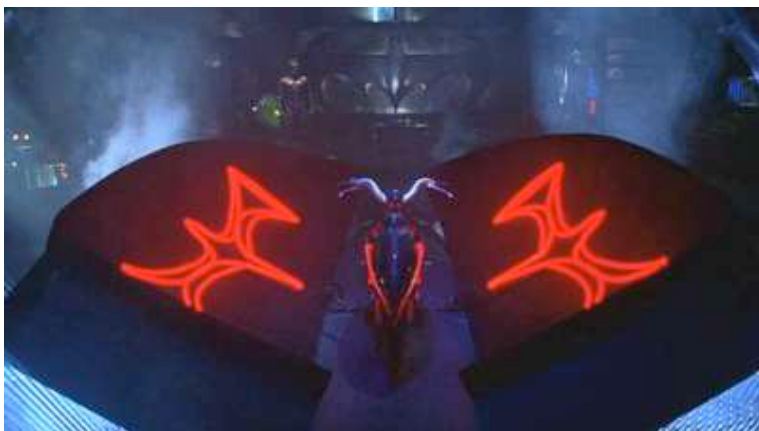
Off in a corner, we see poor unfortunate Michael Gough, one of only two cast members remaining from Tim Burton's original film, once again reprising his role of Alfred. He cranks his British-ness up to the max by telling Batman, "Do try to bring this one back in one piece, sir!"

Then, we see the Batmobile's jet engines fire up. Yep, jet engines. On the Batmobile. I'm sure this comes in very handy when Batman wants to stealthily creep up on some criminals in the act. Big flames shoot out as the Batmobile blasts off down a tunnel.

Robin then watches as his motorcycle, called the Redbird, is also hoisted up on a hydraulic pedestal. For no reason, it's encased in some kind of curved box-type thing that splits down the middle to reveal his bike. Additionally, covering the interior of this box are two Robin Logos in neon [?]. Believe me, it's just as bizarre as it sounds.

Watching this, I have to wonder why Batman has even bothered with all these weird, elaborate flourishes and decorations in his Batcave. I mean, besides Batman, Robin, and Alfred, who's going to see any of this? Would it really make any difference if Robin just put Redbird in the corner and covered it with a sheet?

Granted, Bruce Wayne is a millionaire, but I can't think of a more ludicrous waste of money. Hopefully, corporate accounting scandals will finally catch up with Wayne Enterprises and we'll hear this said on Capitol Hill: "Mr. Wayne, I see by your books that you've allocated five hundred thousand dollars to laser lights and smoke machines, can you explain that for us, sir?"



"Holy conspicuous consumption!"

Robin hops on Redbird, which naturally also has a jet engine, and roars off down the

same tunnel. As soon as he's gone, Alfred has a spell of a Movie Illness that causes his lips to quiver, his eyelids to flutter, and forces him to lean against a wall to keep from collapsing. Either that, or he just saw *8MM*.

We watch Batman and Robin cruise through the tunnel at jet speed for several minutes, which makes this tunnel at least as long as that of a particle accelerator. A little TV screen spins out from Batman's steering wheel, and Commissioner Gordon's face appears. Gordon is played by Pat Hingle, the other cast member still remaining from Burton's original. For some reason, Commissioner Gordon is dressed like an army general [?], with four gold stars on each shoulder and gold leaves on his hat. Am I the only one who fondly remembers a white-haired guy who wore an overcoat and black square frames?

Gordon tells Batman that there's a new villain taking over the antiquities wing of the Gotham Museum of Art. Apparently, this guy can imprison guards in blocks of ice and, fittingly, "he's calling himself Mr. Freeze!" Batman repeats the name as he and Robin continue to roar down their impossibly long tunnel.

We then cut to a stone building with the words GOTHAM MUSEUM OF ART engraved on the facade. Inside, several security guards run towards Mr. Freeze. There's no evidence here of any guards imprisoned in blocks of ice, but maybe Commissioner Gordon is just precognitive.

The guards start busting caps at him, so Mr. Freeze fires his big Ice Cannon at them. A bright bluish-white beam hits the guards and they all turn into rent-a-copsicles. We then get a close-up of Mr. Freeze (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) as he grins and says, "The iceman cometh!" Or, rather, in Arnie-Speak: "Deh aiyceman kummet!"

Some of Mr. Freeze's Eskimo-like henchmen come up to him, holding a struggling, non-frozen guard. Why are they doing this? You see, in the script the guard is supposed to beg Freeze for mercy, which is what he's doing now. Mr. Freeze replies, "I'm afraid that my condition has left me COLD to your pleas of mercy!" (Get used to these stupid puns on ice, freezing, and being cold, people.) Mr. Freeze then fires the Ice Cannon and turns the guy into an ice sculpture just like all the other guards. So apparently the whole "begging for mercy" thing was only put in there to set up that retarded pun. And it only gets worse.

Freeze spots a huge diamond inside a glass case and fires his Ice Cannon at it. As a result, the glass case explodes, leaving the diamond unharmed [?]. Freeze eagerly grabs the diamond, when suddenly the skylight shatters above him. Batman crashes through and lands on the head of a dinosaur. (A dinosaur? In an *art museum*?) Batman memorably says, "Hi, Freeze. I'm Batman." At this point, I started to wonder if this script had been written by a computer.

Batman then slides on his feet, skating all the way down the dinosaur's neck, down its spine, and goes flying off the tip of its tail. Then, while obviously hanging on wires, Batman spreads his cloak and lands with his feet in Freeze's chest, which causes the diamond to go flying. For another much-needed dumb pun, Freeze tells Batman, "You're not sending me to the cooler!" Or, rather, in Arnie-Speak: "Yeh nawt sendin me to deh KOOLAH!"





Duu-uu-uude! Batman *shreds!*

At that moment, Robin comes crashing through the front door of the museum on his bike. You know, if this is the amount of property these two supposed "heroes" have to destroy to save the diamond, then perhaps the museum would be better off just letting Freeze have it.

We then get a shot of Robin on his bike, flying forward while obviously being suspended by wires. Behind him we see that, stupidly, the hole he's left in the museum door is exactly the same shape as his Robin Logo [!]. What the hell?

Robin gently lands but his bike slips on the icy floor, causing him to bump into a pedestal holding up a vase. Literally, just like a *Loony Toons* cartoon, the vase flies directly upwards [!] and hangs in the air for several seconds. We don't actually see it hanging there, but given the amount of screen time that passes before it lands, that's the only conclusion we can draw.

Batman catches the vase while Robin goes over and kicks away Freeze's Ice Cannon. The Cannon flies through the air like a missile and impossibly ends up right on top of a big stone Buddha head. The way it lands, there's got to be a big magnet in the head keeping it in place, otherwise there's no explanation for why it just sticks there. Robin then defies gravity himself and "jumps" over to Batman, but with the way this is staged he looks to be just floating around in the air for several seconds. Batman holds up the vase and says, "You break it, you buy it." Yuk yuk.

"Grab the gem!" Freeze screams to his Eskimo henchmen. "Kill the heroes!" (You know, I haven't heard a bad guy actually refer to his opponents as "heroes" since I watched episodes of *The Superfriends*.) About a dozen guys skate out, and we see they're all wearing your standard issue post-apocalyptic henchmen gear. (They must shop at the same store as Ragnar's goons in [Never Too Young to Die](#).) They also carry hockey sticks and wear masks exactly like the one worn by *Jason X*.

Freeze yells, "Yes! Kill them! Kill them! Yes!" (I'm assuming this is because [Manos has decreed it](#).) Then he helpfully commands his henchmen to "Destroy everything!" [?] as they surround Batman and Robin. Robin cleverly calls them "the hockey team from hell!" Wow, I hadn't even noticed the similarity before, but now that you mention it, hah hah!

Don't give up your day job, Robin. Whatever that is.





Yes, and it only gets stupider, folks.

Batman and Robin duke it out with the henchmen, while Freeze climbs some steps and fights with a half-dozen random security guards. Where did these guys suddenly come from? Were they all waiting for their cue to rush out and get beaten up? Is there usually a Green Room at every superhero fight?

Needless to say, each of these fights violate all three of Newton's laws of motion. Freeze throws a security guard, somehow managing to fling him in a perfectly straight line so that he slams into a nearby column. Meanwhile, Batman and Robin get knocked on their backs by two skater henchmen, but succeed in taking away their hockey sticks anyway as they dispose of the two goons.

Batman and Robin then each tap their boots together, causing ice skate blades to pop out of the soles [!!]. Unless the two of them had blades surgically implanted in their feet, this is impossible. Now, for those of you who were disappointed that we hadn't yet gotten a pun on the word "ice" as a slang term for "diamonds", Batman tells Robin to "get the ice. I'll get the iceman." You know, these never get old.

We cut to one of the hockey henchmen using his stick to move the diamond along the ice just like a puck. Of course, if he just picked the damn thing up, there would be a far lower chance of Robin coming along and snatching it away. But I guess that would just make too much sense.

Robin swoops in with his newly acquired hockey stick and checks a few henchmen to get control of the diamond. Meanwhile, Freeze is still beating up random security guards and hurling them in impossible trajectories.

For a real topper, he spots his Ice Cannon on top of that Buddha head and decides to employ the same technique as when you toss a shoe up to get your basketball out of a tree. He literally throws a guard straight up towards the roof, and the guard knocks the gun off the statue. Naturally, it falls right back in Freeze's arms.

There's some more dumb hockey game-like antics as we cut back and forth between Batman and Robin both sparring with henchmen. Robin gets hold of the diamond and stupidly takes a second to stop, look at it, and say "Sweet!" He then skates over to Batman and adds to the unbelievably clever repartee: "I got mine. Where's yours?"

Finally, Freeze gets bored with beating up on redshirt security guards and calls out to Batman and Robin, "What killed the dinosaurs?" Oh, no. Given how much this movie has perverted all concepts of physics, I really don't want to see what it's about to do with history. Sure enough, Freeze tells them that it was "The Ice Age!" Ordinarily, I'd list everything factually incorrect about this statement, but at this point, I think that would just be cruel. Plus, I've still got a whole buttload of *really* dumb stuff to cover.

Anyway, this stupid Ice Age pun was inserted so that Freeze can now fire his Ice Cannon at the dinosaur statue. (In turn, this means that the stupid Ice Age pun is the sole reason that there's a dinosaur in an art museum.) The frozen dinosaur begins to crack and fall apart, forcing Batman and Robin to skate away as quickly as possible. Of course, it's not like Freeze could have just aimed his Ice Cannon directly at Batman and Robin if he

wanted to get rid of them. No, that would have been much too easy. And not stupid enough.

One of the henchmen rams into Robin, knocking him silly and sending the diamond flying. The henchmen then start passing it back and forth, continuing that fabulous hockey game impression that everyone loved so much. Dammit, just pick the thing up already!

Upon witnessing this, Robin takes a spear off a statue [?]. Do most stone statues come with detachable parts? He decides to use the spear as a javelin, revealing that it's really a magical spear that allows him to defy gravity and launch himself over all the henchmen. Nice stunt, no? Unfortunately, there was no reason for it, other than somebody thought a javelin stunt would look "cool".

Finally, a henchman uses his stick to somehow knock the diamond directly into Freeze's hand. Freeze gets into his vehicle, called the "Freezemobile" (but only in the production notes on the DVD), which looks like a big silver PT Cruiser with tank tires and huge spikes sticking out the front. Meanwhile, Batman is still fighting random henchmen to kill some time.

Freeze rolls forward and opens up the roof of the Freezemobile, revealing a big dildo-looking rocket that he'll use to make his getaway. This prompts Batman to hook a Bat Rope around a ceiling girder and lower himself down into the rocket. Somehow, Freeze is already inside, and he unsurprisingly quips about how glad he is that Batman could "drop in!"

Freeze knocks Batman out and steps on a foot pedal [?] to start the rocket, which apparently must mean it's been built out of leftover parts from a sewing machine. Robin sees the rocket and leaps forward while once again clearly suspended by wires. He lands on the outside of the rocket, but can't get a firm grasp, so he uses a couple of Robin Magnets to affix himself. Yep, Robin is now desperately hanging onto the side of a giant phallic symbol. Really, who needs the Ambiguously Gay Duo when there's just as much innuendo in the real thing?

The big dildo launches and is soon high above Gotham City with Robin still stuck to the outside. Inside, Batman regains consciousness and tries to get to Freeze, but Freeze kicks him in the head and aims the Ice Cannon at him. For some reason, this thing is suddenly as surgical as a laser. Instead of completely freezing him in a block of ice, it just freezes Batman's wrists to the side of the rocket with a pair of ice manacles. It's good to see they're keeping the behavior of this weapon consistent so early in the film.

Freeze points to the rocket's altimeter and tells Batman that the numbers are "the harbinger of your doom!" I don't know whose idea it was to have Arnie say "harbinger", but I hope that person is homeless now. Freeze tells Batman to prepare for the "icy cold of space" and floats the dubious notion that "At thirty thousand feet, your heart will freeze!" Then he feels compelled to add, "And beat no more!" Hey, thanks for pointing that last part out.

Anyway, blah blah blah, Freeze has got Batman in one of those preposterous Rube Goldberg-type traps that villains used to set for Batman on the old TV show, which would invariably prompt the announcement to tune in at the "same Bat Time" tomorrow. Remarkably, there's even less suspense here about whether or not Batman will escape.

Outside, Robin is still trying to climb up the dildo with his Robin Magnets. Meanwhile, Freeze decides to give Batman more time to escape by continuing to explain what will

happen to him: "Once you're frozen, your icy tomb will plummet back to Gotham!" Batman replies that this will "slaughter thousands!" Freeze just laughs at this, since he's evil and everything. Then he puts on some goofy Mr. Magoo-like goggles, which don't exactly do much to ratchet up the "evil quotient" on this character. Finally, he blows out the hatch on the rocket and flies out.



"The goggles! They do nothing!"

Freeze drops for a little while, then pulls a switch on his suit that opens up butterfly-like wings on his back. These were probably supposed to look "cool", but not only do they *not* look cool, they're not even slightly realistic as a flying device. They might as well have just had Freeze hold two tiny feathers in each hand and flap his arms to make himself fly.

Robin eventually pulls himself inside the rocket and explains to Batman that he was "just hanging around!" Because I guess simply freezing in the dead of space wouldn't have been painful enough for Batman. After some dumb repartee that isn't worth going into, Robin uses his Robin Laser to melt Batman's ice shackles. Batman then pulls out something that is, according to Robin, a "Bat Bomb!" Batman explains to him that they have to blow up the rocket so that it won't "turn Gotham into a crater!" Robin asks how they're going to escape from the rocket, "call a taxi?" No, but I think Chris O'Donnell is currently driving one.

Batman reaches for the emergency hatch switch and tells Robin to "Watch out for the first step!" Robin cries out "Surf's up!" as Batman blows out two hatches, with Batman flying out of one and Robin flying out of the other. Okay, if this rocket was really only meant for Freeze to make his getaway, why would there be three escape hatches on it? Even stranger, the hatch doors are each made up of three segments, with the outer two segments collapsing away to leave a section that happens to be the same size as a boogie board.

You guessed it, this was all to set up an "ultra-kewl" sequence where Batman and Robin sky-surf on these boards away from the exploding dildo. Obviously, this part was put in so the Warner Brothers promotional department could have something "awesome" to stick it in the trailer and the TV spots. I guess even *they* realized that "Two solid hours of puns!" wouldn't exactly be a strong selling point.





Duuu-uu-de! Batman makes me wanna Do the Dew!

Batman and Robin then start to actually catch up [?] with Freeze even though he jumped out of the rocket several minutes before they did. At the same time, there are huge chunks of flaming dildo debris raining down on Gotham in the background. You'd think this would kill at least a couple of people, but conveniently for Batman, nothing is ever made of this.

Batman jumps off his boogie board and lands right on Mr. Freeze's back, allowing us to see that on the way down, Freeze was just holding the diamond in his hand [!]. Naturally, when Batman lands on him, this sends the diamond flying off. One guess who just happens to catch it.

Robin gleefully looks at the jewel for a while until he realizes he's about to land right on top of a really pointy skyscraper. He somehow manages to surf down the sloped roof of the building, knocking off CGI shingles along the way. He then begins to plummet to the street, shouting out "Kowabunga!" as he does some more "extreme" sky-surfing moves.

Meanwhile, Batman and Freeze are tussling in the air as they continue hurtling to the ground. Freeze decides to detach his wings, which gets Batman off his back. To slow his fall, Freeze fires his Ice Cannon down into a big smokestack-like furnace, causing a big pile of snow [?] to appear beneath him. Are there also "hail" and "slush" settings on this thing?

Freeze gets to the bottom of the furnace and makes his way through some snowy corridors. Batman and Robin eventually land on the big pile of snow and follow, revealing that there's practically a blizzard in there.

Batman catches up to Freeze, but Freeze uses the tricky tactic of "closing the door behind him" to knock Batman for a loop. While Batman catches his breath, Robin goes after Freeze instead. Batman cries out, "Robin, no!" just as Freeze finally does what he could have done about twenty times over in the last five minutes: He fires his Ice Cannon at Robin and freezes him solid.

Freeze walks forward and amazingly finds the diamond still in Robin's hand [!]. He grabs it, telling the Robin-sicle to "Stay cool, bird boy!" Batman runs up just as Freeze's spiky PT Cruiser crashes through a brick wall. I guess this is Freeze's henchmen coming to pick him up, but how they knew where he was going to land is anybody's guess.

Freeze tells Batman that he has "eleven minutes" to save Robin. Where did he come up with this figure? Robin's already frozen solid, so what happens in eleven minutes that could possibly be any worse? Anyway, this introduces the classic "you can catch the villain, or you can save your friend and/or girlfriend, but you can't do both" dilemma that was already a musty cliché back before the advent of talkies.

Naturally, Batman elects to save Robin, but first, he just stands there for half a minute as Freeze walks through the gaping hole in the brick wall and uses his Ice Cannon to close it

behind him. Finally, Batman gets down to business, picking up the Robin-sicle and dropping him into a convenient reservoir of water. He then uses his Bat Laser to heat the water up, and it begins glowing a bright crimson red [!]. Go boil a pot of water on your stove and let me know if it turns this color.

After some shots of Robin underwater having transformed into a blatantly obvious mannequin, he comes to the surface, completely thawed and moving around normally. That's right. No hypothermia, no frostbite, no nothing. Robin wants to know if they got Freeze and Batman just gives him the Grumpy Look as he shakes his head.



Actually, this qualifies as Chris O'Donnell's Oscar Clip Moment.

We cut to a ruined castle out in the jungle somewhere. This is a mad scientist's lab, and pretty obviously "inspired" by Frankenstein movies. (Those who doubt this inspiration are immediately silenced as lightning actually strikes the castle.)

Inside we find Pamela Isley, mad scientist, being played by Uma Thurman in Plain Chick mode. Meaning, her hair is dyed brown and in desperate need of conditioner, and she's wearing a dirty smock and glasses with thick black frames. She helpfully describes her experiments into an Exposition Device, I mean, into a tape recorder.

Isley explains how she's experimenting with "animal-plant cross breedings". She's giving plants doses of a formula called "Venom" so that "these plants can fight back like animals" against "the thoughtless ravages of man!" This lets us know that, since this is the 90's, the soon-to-be Poison Ivy has been updated to a fanatical tree-hugger.

Isley hears some screams coming from behind an ominous steel door. She makes an expository note about how someone named Dr. Woodrue has taken some samples of her Venom for use in his "mysterious Gilgamesh wing!"



We then cut to Dr. Jason Woodrue inside the wing and find he's a skinny scientist with coke-bottle lenses and the obligatory two shocks of white hair in his wild mane. He turns to a multicultural bunch of bigwigs up on a catwalk and addresses them as the "Un-ited Nations". He describes the auction that they'll be participating in, then he picks up a phone receiver to say hello to a "mystery bidder" who will also be joining in.

Woodrue walks over to a big examining table where, for maximum "cool" effect, some green laser lights are pointlessly being projected through a cloud of dry ice fog. Some goons bring out a skinny guy whom Woodrue identifies as a serial killer who's serving a life sentence. The goons strap him down on the examining table as Woodrue explains that he's drilled holes in the guy's head, thus creating "viaducts into the most primitive part of his brain!" So *that's* how this script was written!

For some reason, the goons stick a mask on the serial killer that makes him look exactly like the 50's Mexican wrestler Santo. Woodrue then pulls out a Sparkletts bottle containing a bright green chemical that looks like radiator fluid. Or the stuff they pumped into the clones at [Clonus](#). However, going by the big skull and crossbones label on the side that says "VENOM", I'm going to guess this contains Venom. Woodrue calls this "my super-solider serum!" Uh, yeah. I guess just desecrating DC heroes wasn't enough for the filmmakers, so they had to reach across publisher lines to sully up Captain America, too.

Woodrue pours the Venom into a random glass funnel. We then pan up to get a clear shot of the big shots on the catwalk, and here's what we find: 1) a guy wearing an American army general's uniform, 2) an obviously Russian woman wearing a big Cossack hat, 3) a Yassir Arafat-type with a kaffiyeh on his head, 4) a dead ringer for Fidel Castro, 5) a black guy in a dashiki, and finally, 6) a Japanese guy in a business suit. Nope, not one single stereotype in the whole bunch. (Unfortunately, there's no sign of Red Sash Guy from [Dean Koontz's Mr. Murder](#).)



It's a small world, after all.

Woodrue explains that he combined Venom with his own special mix of "steroids and toxins" as he hooks up some tubes to the skinny serial killer guy. "Time to scream!" he says, indicating that he must have missed the last half hour.

Venom starts to get pumped into the serial killer's head, and we watch as he's suddenly super-sized, with really icky veins popping out of his muscles. (I hear this is also what happened to Mark McGwire.) Woodrue declares this to be the "ultimate killing machine, which I call... Bane!" Apparently, he's called this because he's supposed to be "the bane of

humanity". Oh, now I get it. Meanwhile, Pamela Isley secretly watches all of this from behind some racks of test tubes.

Woodrue tells the Evil Rainbow Coalition that they could each have thousands of super-soldiers just like Bane, and begins to auction off the formula starting at ten million, oh, let's say, dollars. Then, for some reason, Woodrue punches a glowing green button on Bane's chest and cries out, "Turbo!" What is he, the arcade version of NBA Jam? "Show off for Daddy!" Woodrue says. Yeah, this sure sounds like a good idea that won't be at all lethal to some random goons.

Bane begins roaring as more radiator fluid is pumped into his head, and Woodrue takes cover. Bane breaks free of his restraints, so some idiot goon who must be getting paid a hell of a lot of money comes up and actually tries to refasten them. Of course, Bane tosses him into a shelf containing the standard mad scientist collection of Beakers Of Multicolored Liquids. Bane raises his fists and roars, appropriately enough, "BAAAAANNNEE!!"



"You see, I've created him to [fight the Martians!](#)"

Meanwhile, Woodrue spots Pamela Isley cowering in the corner. He quickly hustles her out of the Gilgamesh lab, explaining that their previous sponsor was uninterested in the military applications of their research and cut off funding. Isley is outraged because this whole Bane thing runs counter to her lifelong philosophy of protecting plants. Don't ask me how it runs counter to that philosophy. It just does.

She denounces him for hatching a "maniacal scheme for world domination!" Tell me, could there be a scheme for world domination that *wouldn't* be maniacal? Has anyone ever said, "Wow, Doc, this sure is a sensible, cost-effective plan for world domination you have here! Let's implement it!"

She calls him a "psycho" and promises to blow the whistle on him and wreck his career. Which is roughly the last thing General Ames said in the aforementioned [Mr. Murder](#) before his head became really intimate with the dashboard of his car. Pretty much the same thing happens here, as Woodrue shrieks and pushes her into another shelf of Beakers Of Multicolored Liquids, which just happens to hold a few bottles of Venom, too.

Woodrue surveys the damage he's done, and when we cut back to Isley she suddenly has snakes all over her face [??]. The chemicals then start melting away the ground underneath her, which would only follow, right? We watch as she and all the plants and snakes and crap start sinking into a hole while Woodrue looks on gleefully. As the hole develops, green laser light comes shooting out of the ground [?] and naturally, this

illuminates some dry ice fog, too.



You do have to give it to Uma for being a trooper here. I saw *Celebrity Fear Factor* and I know that Stephen Baldwin wouldn't have the balls to let snakes crawl all over his face.

Woodrue eagerly calls out to his "fellow maniacs" that "Bidding begins!" and runs off. We then segue from a cloud of green dry ice fog to a mist of vapor, and find a pair of feet soaking in hot water. These feet belong to Robin, and apparently this is all one has to do to recover from being frozen solid in a block of ice.

Robin's now in his secret identity of Dick Grayson, and he's down in the Batcave with Alfred and Batman, who's now in his secret identity of Bruce Wayne. On a *Star Trek*-like viewscreen in the middle of the cave, Bruce pulls up a security tape from Gotham University Labs that he says was recorded two years ago.

It shows black and white images of Mr. Freeze back in the day when he was just a normal scientist. Here, Arnie looks a lot like a 'roided up version of Jonas Salk as he conducts experiments. Bruce says this was taped back when he was "Victor Fries", and wow, what a coincidence that name is, huh?



"Ahhh, yes, I haff found deh cyoor for Roobella!"

Bruce explains that Dr. Fries used to be a molecular biologist, but when his wife Nora came down with "MacGregor's Syndrome", he undertook procedures to cryogenically freeze her until he could find a cure. Which is just what you would expect a "molecular biologist" to do, right? Still, someone named *Nora Fries* had to be cryogenically frozen. Victor's assistants must have had a field day with that one.

Apparently, Fries was a little out of his area, because his laboratory setup turns out to be

a bit unconventional. It seems his technique for cryogenically freezing someone involves a 10 cubic foot vat of mysterious milky liquid with absolutely no cover on it. Also, it appears crucial to the procedure to position this vat directly below a catwalk that doesn't have a railing.

Bruce narrates the video, telling Robin that "here's where everything goes north." Hah! Predictably, there's some kind of explosion in the lab, and Fries gets hit with some huge sparks coming off his equipment (which happens all the time in laboratories, I'm sure). He falls right into the vat. Oh my, how did that happen? A nice touch is how this supposed "security camera" actually *pans down* to follow Fries as he plunges into the icy chemicals.

Dick watches this and cries out, "That's gotta hurt!" like he's watching an episode of *America's Funniest Home Cryogenic Procedures*. Bruce explains that the liquid was "fifty below" (Below what?), but that Fries "somehow survived" (Look, leave the sarcasm to me, Bruce). Unfortunately, the "cryo-solution mutated his body", and damn, ain't that always the way? On the tape, we see an icy Fries emerge from a big cloud of dry ice fog, contorting his face into expressions of deep pain.



Yeah, you and us both, Arnie.

Bruce says that Freeze's wife was presumed dead, then brings up a computer graphic of Freeze in his suit. He explains that Freeze can't survive without extreme cold, and that his "cryo-suit" uses "diamond-enhanced lasers" to keep him at "zero degrees". Zero degrees? Is this Fahrenheit? Celsius? Kelvin? The movie never says. But if we're talking about Celsius, then for the record, my refrigerator can keep stuff at "zero degrees" and it doesn't use diamond-enhanced lasers to do it.

Bruce calls for Alfred, who's off having an attack of Movie Illness and leaning against the Bat Suit. He eventually composes himself and comes over, and Bruce asks him to retrieve the "Wayne Diamonds". Dude, *any* diamonds that belong to you would technically be the "Wayne Diamonds", wouldn't they? Dick guesses that they'll be setting a trap for Mr. Freeze, but Bruce wants Dick to first spend "ten hours in the simulator". Perhaps this is a device that simulates being in a movie that actually requires you to act.

Bruce tells Dick he almost got himself killed tonight, but Dick gets defensive and says that Bruce is being "too protective", adding, "How are we supposed to work together if you won't trust me?" Then he storms off, and we cut to Alfred, taking time out from looking ghastly and propping himself up on walls to offer this sage query: "How, indeed?"

In the next scene, Bruce and Alfred are walking though Wayne Manor, and Bruce starts bitching and moaning that he can't trust Dick not to hurt himself. Alfred replies that

Bruce's problem is that, in fact, he doesn't trust anyone. (Perhaps they should have called this movie *Batman & Dr. Phil.*) Bruce disagrees, pointing out that he trusts Alfred, but Alfred drops a major hint when he says that "I shan't be here forever!" Bruce, of course, completely misses this hint and bids Alfred goodnight.

Bruce walks out into the corridor and stares blankly into space. We cut to his pointlessly tilted POV of the corridor, and eventually he sees himself as a small child running through the halls of Wayne Manor. Little Bruce trips and skins his knees, so a young Alfred wearing a Starbucks apron comes out and dusts him off, and then they both fade out. Yeah, that was one fantastic memory. Bruce gets all misty-eyed and walks off.



Another great moment in the life of Young Bruce Wayne.

Back at the mad scientist lab in the jungle, we find Dr. Woodrue on the phone with the "mystery bidder", who he addresses as "Your Supreme Ruthlessness". (Must be Martha Stewart.) Apparently, the mystery bidder won the auction, so Woodrue promises to send out a "flawless super-soldier" by "overnight mail". Yuk, yuk. By the way, this mystery bidder will never be seen, identified, or become important to the plot in any way. And he won't be the only one.

Suddenly, some blue laser lights come shooting out of a hole in the ground, which is something else that happens quite often in laboratories. Eventually, a transmogrified Pamela Isley rises up out of the ground. Now that her glasses are gone and her shirt is conveniently torn to show off her belly, Uma is now in Hot Chick mode.

Woodrue sees her and cries out, "Pamela?" and then goes totally gonzo for her. Uma turns on a weird, creepy voice which is supposed to be seductive, but will instantly make any man's skin crawl. She says, "Hello... Jason!" using *exactly the same inflection* as when Jerry Seinfeld used to say "Hello... Newman!" I don't know about you, but that's not something I find to be particularly erotic.

To the sound of a supposedly alluring sax, she explains how the "animal-plant toxins" have "replaced my blood with aloe, my skin with chlorophyll, and filled my lips..." With collagen? With Botox? She pulls Woodrue in for a kiss, and he of course is more than happy to oblige. Then she finishes her sentence: "...with venom!" Oh, great. Now you tell me. (Also, she leaves her eyes wide open during this kiss. Eww!)

Woodrue's lips turn black and he starts choking. Isley then feels the need to further explain that "I'm poison." Not poisonous, mind you. Poison. Woodrue keels over dead, and Isley pronounces that "It's a jungle in here!" Why? Because she's into plants and she really loves plant puns, of course. Why do you ask?

Then she starts smashing random beakers and pronouncing herself to be "Nature's arm! Her spirit, her will. Hell, I *am* Mother Nature!" She then describes to no one in particular her plan to use plants to take over the world, because, according to her, "It's not nice to fool with Mother Nature!" Yeah, that's what people keep trying to tell Michael Jackson, but he never listens.

She splashes around some pink liquid and tosses a kerosene lamp to the ground, resulting in a huge fire. She's about to throw a beaker on the fire, when suddenly she stops and notices a big Wayne Enterprises logo on the beaker. She's really quite enthralled with it. If Isley was working in this same laboratory all along, why wouldn't she have noticed this before?

Bane emerges from... well, somewhere, doing the raising fists and roaring bit. For no particular reason, Isley decides Bane will now become her man-servant, and Bane seems happy to go along with this. None of this is actually said, by the way. Isley just starts abruptly barking orders to him. She shows him the Wayne Enterprises beaker and tells him they've "got a plane to catch!" and the two leave the flaming laboratory. So, I guess she's really curious about whoever manufactured that beaker.



"Rah! I'm a mon-stah! Rah!"

We then cut to an abandoned ice cream factory with a really freaky snowman face on the front, which unsurprisingly turns out to be Mr. Freeze's hideout. (And you're telling me the police *still* can't find him?) Inside, an icicle-covered TV set is screening the Rankin-Bass stop-motion cartoon *The Year Without a Santa Claus*. Basically, this is just an excuse to show the Snow Miser dancing around and singing, because his song is really appropriate to Freeze's character. You see, he's Mr. Freeze, so he likes cold things.

We see Freeze quite enthusiastically getting into the song, and he dances around while wearing white fuzzy polar bear slippers and a robe with a polar bear design. Because he likes cold things. A lot. Did you get that yet?

He stands and waves his arms back and forth, trying to lead all of his Eskimo henchmen in a singalong with the Snow Miser. While he does this, they all shiver and lick at TV dinners that are still frozen solid [?]. They limply mouth the words as, off on the side, Ms. B. Haven (played by Vivica A. Fox in a white feather boa and little else) dances and sings along. (By the way, I'm just going by the closing credits on the name of her character, because it's never said. Obviously, Vivica had a bigger part in the script, but by the time the film hit theaters it was cut down to just this one scene.)

Freeze gets frustrated with his henchman chorus, so he storms off. Ms. B. Haven (which I

think is also the name of a recording artist on P. Diddy's label) follows right behind him, telling him that she's "feeling hot" and that he's "the most perfect man I've ever known!" Apparently, this means she was raised on Paradise Island and Freeze is the first man she's ever known.

Ms. B. Haven asks if they can "heat things up", but Freeze says his "passion thaws for my bride alone!" Ms. B. calls this "the cold shoulder". (Folks, I don't know how much longer I can keep taking note of all these stupid "cold" puns.) Rejected, she walks off, making me wonder why Freeze even keeps her around in the first place.

He calls over one of his henchmen, who's cleverly named "Frosty". Frosty actually says, "Yeah, Boss?" as he walks up. Freeze goes to his desk or something to grab a handful of small diamonds to load into his cryo-suit. He says the battle with Batman "exhausted my power!" Wow, him too?

However, he points out that he was still successful in getting the big unnamed diamond, which he lifts up and admires. Frosty helpfully tells him, "Absolutely, Boss!" Why did Freeze call this guy over, again? Oh yeah, he needed someone to deliver exposition to.

Freeze explains that he has to get one more big diamond so that his "freezing engine will be complete!" He goes into a walk-in freezer, and Frosty helpfully follows so that Freeze can continue his exposition. He says, "I will freeze the city! Then I will hold Gotham ransom!" Yes, *in that order*. He says the city must meet his demands or it will be "winter forever!" You mean, sorta like Manitoba?

He continues spouting off raw exposition, saying that he'll make these demands of the "city fathers", whoever they are, so that they give him "the billions I need to complete my research!" Then he makes it clear that he's doing all this to "find a cure" for his ill wife. So, apparently, this whole villainous scheme came about because Freeze couldn't get a research grant.

Now that all of the exposition is done, he tells Frosty to beat it and Frosty says, "Sure, Boss!" You know, the use of a henchman as an expository device has suddenly made me nostalgic for the brilliant tape recorder method of a few scenes back.

Freeze pulls aside a TV dinner, revealing a glowing blue button. He says to no one in particular that "We need quality time!" as he punches the button, revealing a secret chamber where his catatonic wife (or a reasonable facsimile thereof) is floating in a tank of bubbling water.

He stands at the tank and promises his mannequin wife that they will be together "soon". Then he leaves. Yes, that really was "quality time". No, seriously. It was. Any second in this movie where nobody's making stupid puns is "quality time" in my eyes.

The next day outside Wayne Manor, we see a chubby blonde chick in a school uniform ring the front doorbell. Bruce calls for Alfred, but he's conveniently not around, so Dick goes to answer it instead. Alfred suddenly emerges and apologizes for dozing off, but Bruce brushes it off and says that this is "the first time it's happened in thirty years!" I know this is supposed to make Alfred look really dedicated, but what Bruce doesn't mention is that up until thirty years ago Alfred was a total slacker who snoozed around the clock.

The chubby blonde chick at the door grows impatient, so she decides to climb up on a stone bench and peer over the door frame. This contrived action was clearly put in so that Dick could get a direct, supposedly titillating view of her chubby gams when he opens the

front door. As the camera does a slow pan up her body, we find out that the part of Chubby Blonde Chick is being played by a chubby Alicia Silverstone.

Dick eagerly says, "Please be looking for me!" (which is a bit of dialogue that would have made much more sense during her Aerosmith video days), but she's actually looking for Alfred. She spots him and calls out "Uncle Alfred!" and goes running inside. She turns out to be his niece Barbara, and Alfred is ecstatic that she's come to visit, even though she came all the way from England without providing any prior notice whatsoever.

We next find the four of them all walking in the garden so we can get some more exposition. It turns out that Barbara is the daughter of Alfred's sister Margaret, and that both of her parents were killed in a car crash. Alfred says he's been supporting her ever since, much to the surprise of Bruce and Dick. He's been paying for her tuition to "Oxbridge Academy" (*cough*), where she's been studying computer science (*cough*). Yeah, she and Christmas Jones must be classmates.

Barbara notices Dick's motorcycle (a normal one, not Redbird) and he offers to teach her how to ride. She giggles and claims to be "terrified of these things", which will be "humorously ironic" later on when we find out the truth about her. Of course, nowhere in all this exposition did they find time to explain why Barbara doesn't have an English accent, despite the fact that Alfred has one and Barbara was even going to school in England. Whoops, there I go again, actually thinking about stuff.

Bruce then invites Barbara to come stay with them and she accepts. Yep, it's just that easy. Alfred obliquely brings up the whole Batman thing, saying "Ut-whay about the Atcave-bay", or words to that effect, but Bruce simply says "she's family" and that's that.

Later that night, we find Alfred at a computer, using your standard Hollywood mockup of a web browser to watch video of somebody riding an elephant. (He must be using the Bat DSL line to download this.) Barbara comes in, dressed for bed in a robe that's suspiciously wrapped very tightly around her. She asks what he's doing and Alfred says he's trying to find his brother Wilfred, who's butler to some high muckety-muck in India. Since he's part of a "floating court", he's hard to track down. Barbara, momentarily lapsing back into the character of Cher from *Clueless* says, "I don't suppose they have fax machines on elephants!"



Look, Alfred, you can watch *Jungle Hell* on your own time, okay?

Alfred gives her a pity laugh and says that "When one grows ancient [?], one yearns for family." Then they both spontaneously decide to look over at an old black and white photo on Alfred's desk signed, "Love, Peg". It's a picture of his sister Margaret. Barbara says she

has a copy, too, but wonders about the "Peg" signature. Alfred explains that Peg was his nickname for her. Okay, how do you get "Peg" out of "Margaret"? Must be a British thing. Anyway, they bid each other goodnight and get all kissy-kissy, huggy-huggy and Barbara walks out.

As soon as she's out in the corridor, Barbara undoes her tightly-wrapped robe and reveals that she's wearing street clothes underneath. Wow! I am surprised! Or, I would be surprised, if I'd had a lobotomy recently.

We then see her slip on a leather jacket, which instantly establishes her tough girl street creds. Tough Girl goes into her bedroom and trots out another cliché that's at least as old as dirt when she lowers a rope of tied-together bed sheets [!] out of her window. Geez. Why don't we just start using curtain wipes while we're at it?

Anyway, Tough Girl and her motorcycle helmet climb down the rope. She then does the old "don't start up the vehicle until you're out of earshot" trick as she silently rolls a motorcycle out of the Wayne Manor garage.

Cut to daylight on the streets of Gotham City, where a red limo rolls into view. A radio report in the background informs us that Bruce Wayne is about to make an appearance at the Gotham Observatory to announce "another legendary contribution to the city!" We then cut to the back seat of the limo and find Pamela Isley slipping on a short brown wig to get back into Plain Chick mode. She tells her chauffeur, who turns out to be Bane, to head to the observatory and "step on it!" Bane growls, "Steppp." I do believe that he's a member of this movie's target audience.

We next see Gotham Observatory, and continuing the tradition of impossible architecture we've come to expect from Batman movies, the observatory is actually being held up in the hands of a giant statue [!]. Inside, Bruce is announcing to a group of reporters the donation of a new advanced telescope to the observatory.

He recites a lame story about his father once telling him to follow his own star, blah blah blah, and standing at his side (for not much purpose other than set dressing) is Elle Macpherson in the role of Julie Madison. "With any luck," Bruce says, "This telescope will give future generations a chance to follow their own stars!" And with any luck, this telescope will give a would-be screenwriter a chance to make up his own *deus ex machina*.

At Bruce's other side is a really old-fashioned gossip reporter, obviously based on Louella Parsons, who goes by the name of "Gossip Gertie". She calls him "Brucey" and asks, "Is it true this telescope can see all around the globe?" He confirms this, and turns things over to two generic scientists in white lab coats.

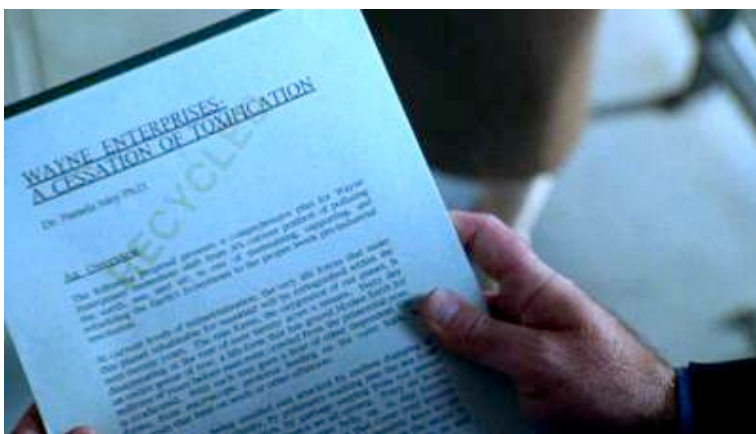
They explain that satellites positioned all around the planet can bounce light off each other and reflect it back to Gotham, allowing the telescope to provide a view of the sky from anywhere on earth. Amazing! I guess astronomers will no longer have to wait for the damn earth to spin around on its axis to see things on the other side. What's that take, a whole 24 hours?

Bruce quips, "Just don't point it at my bedroom!" Brucey, you're a single man living alone with a hunky young guy. I wouldn't be making jokes like this if I were you. Pamela Isley, now in her Plain Chick disguise, slowly creeps into the observatory just as Gossip Gertie is asking the on-topic question of whether or not Bruce and Julie Madison have plans to get married.

Bruce becomes "comically" flustered, literally saying, "Marriage? Uh, marriage? Uh, marriage?" (These are the jokes, people.) Julie eventually bails him out, replying that she and Bruce are "recklessly in love", whatever that means, and that's enough for now. I mean, what more could you want? Dangerously in love? Psychotically in love? Homicidally in love?

Suddenly, we see several security guards trying to stop Pamela Isley from approaching Bruce. She calls one of them a "fascist bulldog", and he replies that if she wants to talk to Bruce Wayne, she needs "an appointment" [?]. Bruce waves off the goons and Isley introduces herself, saying she worked for his "arboreal preservation project in South America." Bruce recalls the project, but he no longer funds it because of a "conflict of ideologies. Dr. Woodrue was a lunatic!"

Isley then hands him a bound report explaining what Wayne Enterprises can do to "cease all actions that toxify our environment!" She then gives your standard wacko extremist tree-hugging spiel that I'd rather forget about, having gotten the same pitch myself from Equinox multi-level marketers once or twice in my life.



Well, first they can start by not letting Joel Schumacher direct any more movies.

For some reason, all of the gathered reporters are drawn to this idiotic tirade and begin pointing microphones her way. Bruce examines the report and declares that it calls for measures that would ultimately kill "millions of people". Come again? Are we really expected to believe that Wayne Enterprises is responsible for the lives of millions of people? If so, then why the hell does Bruce even bother fighting crime in the first place? It seems he could do more by getting a good night's sleep and running his company proficiently than he ever could do as Batman.

Isley calls these millions of deaths "acceptable losses in the battle to save the planet!" (Something tells me she would get along great with [Nick Van Owen](#).) Bruce condescendingly tells her that "People come first," and hands the report back to her. Isley then turns to the reporters and delivers a pro-plant diatribe, basically promising that plants will rise up and reclaim the earth. In response, the gathered crowd bursts out into raucous laughter. Yeah, I know it's pretty dumb, but you'd think these professional journalists would at least save the patronizing laughter until after she's left the room.

Gossip Gertie butts in, telling Isley that "You must be new in town! In Gotham City, Batman and Robin protect us! Even from plants and flowers!" Oh, brother. Where to even start? Batman and Robin "protect us"? Like they're civil servants or something? Aren't we basically talking about two disguised vigilantes who work out of a secret cave? Sure, they

help the police out from time to time, but clearly they're not beholden to the law. At the very least, they're not even obligated to tell anybody before they take off on, say, a six-month vacation. Here's hoping they'll start on that vacation the same day that Gossip Gertie becomes the plants' first victim.

Anyway, this comment prompts more hoots and laughter, so Bruce hands Isley an invitation to meet Batman and Robin [?]. Apparently, they're going to help auction off a prized diamond to "raise money for our botanical gardens." She opens the invitation, revealing that it's for a "Save the Rainforest Costume Ball" with "Special Guests - Batman and Robin". Are the people of Gotham really buying this? Couldn't you just put any two chumps in costumes and tell everybody it's Batman and Robin? I mean, with those suits, the two guys don't even have to be in shape.

Bruce calls the press conference to a close and Isley wanders off. She puts on her creepy anti-sexy voice and says, "Batman and Robin! Militant arm of the warm-blooded oppressors!" She then promises to do away with the "fur and feathered pests", and I think the "fur" part refers to George Clooney's body hair. She says that once she's gotten rid of them, "Gotham will be mine for the greening!" And this script will be ours for the groaning.

We cut to Mr. Freeze watching his wedding video on the icicle encased TV set, and of course his bride looks joyous and beautiful. (In a subtle casting choice, she's being played by supermodel Vendela.) And yes, the whole "watching wedding film/video to remind you of happier times" is yet another story device that's been around since the beginning of time.

Suddenly, Frosty runs in (referring to Freeze as "Chief" for some reason instead of "Boss") to show him a newspaper headline. Freeze, however, is annoyed by the interruption, so he picks up his Ice Cannon and turns the guy into a Goonsicle. Freeze says, "I hate when people talk during the movie!" Yes, silence is golden, but these jokes are not.

In the video, Fries the bridegroom puts a snowflake-shaped pendant around his new bride's neck. So, even back then, he had some kind of cold fetish? Whatever. Mr. Freeze tells his wife's video image that all he needs is "one more diamond" to save her, in case you forgot that in the ten minutes since the last time he explained it. Then he goes over to his frozen thug and examines the newspaper he's holding. (As he does this, I can't help but notice that Frosty is wearing a skull-shaped codpiece just like Poofy Hair Guy in *Never Too Young to Die*! So they really *do* shop at the same store!)

Strangely, the headline is that "Bruce Wayne Loans Diamonds to Flower Ball", and it's at the *top of the front page* [!!]. Talk about a slow news day! Freeze sees this headline and decides to take the bait. Or rather, in Arnie-Speak: "Veddy niiyce..."





And you can read more about that superpowered killer on the loose in our Arts and Leisure section!

After a pointless flyover of Gotham, we cut to the botanical gardens, where some dancers are putting on their own pathetic version of the *Lion King* musical. There are dancers everywhere, with some swinging over the crowd on vines, and all in all it's even lamer than the "Satan's Alley" show from *Staying Alive*. The crowd is having a great time as an emcee takes the stage, followed closely by Batman, Robin, and Gossip Gertie. The emcee then totally disses Batman and Robin by introducing the real guest of honor, namely a big diamond hanging on a necklace. It's carried out in a frame by Commissioner Gordon [?]. I might be wrong, but isn't he the police commissioner? Doesn't he have better things to do than help auction off a diamond?

Batman and Robin make some quiet asides to each other to remind the viewers just waking up that this is supposed to be a trap for Mr. Freeze. Off in a corner, two people dressed in big fur ape suits, one pink and one purple, start shoving dancers around. No one notices, because there's currently some kind of white slavery auction going on. Well, I guess technically they're auctioning off dates with beauty queens to raise money or something, but imagining it's a white slavery auction makes it that much funnier.

Suddenly, everyone stops what they're doing as some Egyptian-sounding music is piped in, while the person in the pink ape suit stands high up on a platform and gyrates. Everyone in the room just stares, completely transfixed for no apparent reason. Unless they think it's Grape Ape. In that case it would make sense.



Wow, this is even sexier than animations between levels of *Donkey Kong*!

Eventually, the Pink Ape strips off pieces of costume, revealing Pamela Isley underneath in Hot Chick mode. So, where did the Egyptian-style music come from? Did Isley bring her own soundtrack? She removes the ape head to reveal that she's now wearing a mask that only covers her eyebrows, which may be the weakest disguise ever thought of since Clark Kent's glasses. She then blows into her palm, causing pink and purple dust that looks exactly like Lik-M-Aid Fun Dip to float all around the room.

Everyone inhales deeply (including Batman and Robin, who really should know better) and instantly they're all even more engrossed in Isley's dance. She sheds the rest of her ape costume and turns around to shake her voluptuous rump for them, because Batman's anaconda don't want none unless you've got buns, hon. She gives them all a little wink over her shoulder, then stagedives to be caught by a whole bunch of tan muscular dudes that are only wearing loincloths.

These guys then start laying down on their stomachs one after another to provide a walkway for her [!], as Isley steps on all of their backs. Don't ask me who these guys are or where they came from, but they turn out to be even lamer than the hockey henchmen by not even participating in the big fistfight that's about to break out.

Eventually, Isley reaches the stage and stands between Batman and Robin. The emcee breathlessly asks who she is, and she says into the microphone, "Poison. Poison Ivy." The crowd delights in this. Then she points her palm at Batman, takes a deep breath, and blows more Lik-M-Aid powder in his face. As you would expect, Batman just stands there and inhales all of it. I guess he's just lucky she's not Anthrax Ivy.

She rubs up against Batman and tells him to "send Junior home" because she's got some "wild oats to sow!" [?] If this is supposed to be a plant-related pun, they are really, really reaching now. Then she slides over to Robin, saying that "On the other hand, youth does have its advantages!" She calls Batman "geriatric" and tells Robin that "My garden needs tending!" Ew. No thanks.

She grabs the diamond from Commissioner Gordon and puts it around her neck, then announces to the entire crowd that "some lucky boy's about to hit the honey pot!" Okay, that's the second plant-themed allusion she's made to her genitalia in about half a minute. This is a witty script, no? She then basically offers her body to the highest bidder, and the men all start yelling out dollar amounts at a feverish pace. If you're wondering why Ivy is attempting to become the highest-paid prostitute ever, keep watching.

Eventually, Batman tops them all with a bid of one million dollars. Robin then outdoes this with a bid of two million, leading to the two "humorously" bidding against each other and incrementing the bid by a million each time. When Batman gets to five million, Robin reminds him, "That's a utility belt, not a money belt!" Huh?

When Batman gets to seven million, there's a cash register noise on the soundtrack [!], and Batman whips out a credit card [!!]. Ugggh. You have *got* to be kidding me. The card has a Bat Logo on it, and the credit card company is called "GothCard". Also, the expiration date states the card is good through "forever", in some sort of dopey allusion to *Batman Forever*.

No, my friends, the pain is not over just yet, because soon Batman quips, "Never leave the cave without it!" Please, may I be shot now? By the way, this little impromptu "auction" existed only for the purpose of the stupid credit card joke. There was no other reason for Ivy to offer her body to the whole crowd like that. You know, I'm beginning to think that maybe this isn't that great of a film.



Making audiences all over the world squirm in agony: Priceless.

With that inanity complete, the Freezemobile suddenly bursts through a wall with its Ice Cannon blazing. Freeze wastes plenty of time freezing random nobodies instead of just aiming the damn thing at Batman and Robin while he still had the element of surprise. He pops out of the Freezemobile and yells, "Alright, everyone! Chill!" Yuk yuk. He then repeats "Chill!" a few more times while blasting people with his handheld Ice Cannon, and believe me, it just gets funnier and funnier each time.

Batman uses a Bat Whatever to knock the Ice Cannon from Freeze's hand, so Freeze sends out his hockey thugs to retrieve it. Why doesn't Freeze just duck back inside the Freezemobile and use the vehicle's Ice Cannon instead? Yes, that was a rhetorical question.

More useless fighting erupts as Batman uses what looks like a neon-lighted sombrero as a shield against goon punches. Robin picks up one of these sombreros and tosses it like a Frisbee, knocking a thug off his feet. Meanwhile, Freeze is still wasting his time beating up on redshirt security guards. He finally gets his Ice Cannon back, so he grabs a vine and swings on it. This somehow allows him to go flying up from the floor and through the air to end up on stage face to face with Poison Ivy. Um, yeah, that could happen.

He looks at her and guesses that she calls herself "Plant Girl". (If the character hadn't come from the comic book, you better believe this is what they would have called her.) He then guesses "Vine Lady" and "Garden Gal", before finally telling her to hand over the diamond, "or I'll turn you into mulch!"

Freeze then just stands there as she slowly unfolds her palm and blows into it, filling his nostrils with Lik-M-Aid. He recognizes it as "pheromone dust", but reveals that he's immune to it. Apparently, it doesn't work on "the cold-hearted", or in Arnie-Speak, "deh code-hahted". He rips the diamond off her neck, calling her a "clever little clover". Although, all she did was stand there, which isn't what I would call particularly clever. So why did he call her that? Because it's a "funny" pun, that's why.

Anyway, Freeze heads back to the Freezemobile while Batman and Robin continue to pointlessly fight thugs. One goon lifts up a neon sombrero, which I guess is really a waiter's tray after all, and holds it in front of his face. Batman punches the guy right through the tray which, I kid you not, is accompanied by a blare of horns [!!] straight out of the old TV show. Man, Adam West should sue.



The way it happens in the movie...

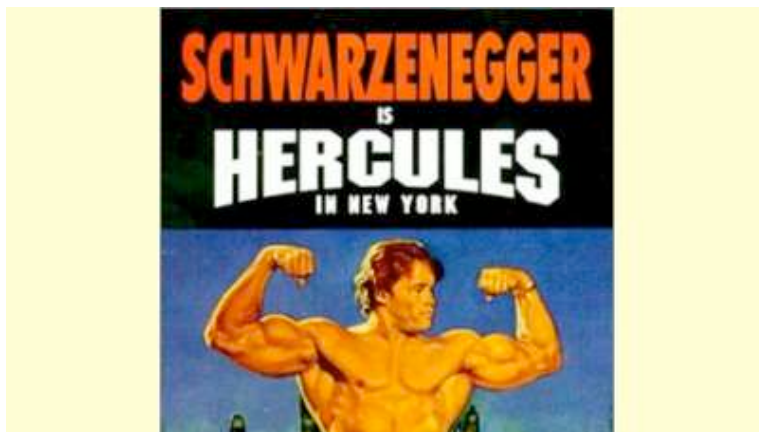




The way Joel Schumacher sees it.

When Freeze gets into his Freezemobile, he gives them a thumbs up and pronounces it to be a "cool party!" He plows through a wall, and Batman and Robin, for some reason, just stand there and watch him go. Batman tells Commissioner Gordon to start thawing people out, while Robin just stares lustfully at Poison Ivy, who makes a kissy face at him.

Before Commissioner Gordon gets down to business, he feels obliged to first inform Poison Ivy that Freeze is "one of the most sinister men in Gotham!" After he leaves, Ivy questionably deems Freeze to be, not a man, but "a god!"



How Ivy sees Freeze.

Then she finds a snow globe that's sitting... um, somewhere, with a miniature cityscape of Gotham inside, and she starts shaking it. This is clearly a WE ARE ESTABLISHING THIS OBJECT SO YOU WILL REMEMBER IT LATER kind of moment. The person in the purple ape suit suddenly shows up and Ivy declares, "Enough monkey business!" The ape head comes off and it's Bane. So, where was he while all that ass kicking was going on? Some super-soldier. Ivy tells him they have work to do, and Bane growls, "Monkeeyyy worrrk!" Yes, it is, but someone had to act in this movie.

We get yet another pointless flyover of Gotham, this one revealing that there's actually a huge, skyscraper-sized statue of a guy right in the middle of the city. (Gee, will this be important later?) Why would anyone put a statue here? The Statue of Liberty, for instance, sits in a harbor. This is so that people can see *it*. Why would you wedge a statue between a bunch of tall buildings so that only the people who work in them would even know about it? Oh, right. Comic Book Movie.

Freeze comes barreling down a bridge, closely followed by two henchmen each in their own mini-Freezemobiles. We zoom in on one of the henchmen, who lets out an Evil Laugh

because he's evil and he likes to laugh. The bridge just "happens" to pass right by the giant statue's head, so Freeze blasts it with his Ice Cannon. This allows him and his henchmen to drive off the bridge and pass right through the back of the statue's head. Meanwhile, the Batmobile and Redbird are close behind in hot pursuit.

We see more flagrant defiance of gravity as Freeze and his henchmen drive down the statue, easily handling impossibly steep angles. Batman and Robin follow, as the chase continues down the statue's arm, heading for the statue's fingers. Batman radios Robin that he can't make the jump, but Robin insists that he can. They bicker for a while, until Batman tells the Batmobile to access "Redbird control codes" and disable Robin's motorcycle.

Freeze and his henchmen all make stunt jumps off the statue's fingers which (luckily for them) just happen to be pointed upwards. Batman follows, but Robin, with his engine disabled, just slides out of control and nearly falls off the statue's hand and kills himself. Gee, thanks, Batman! As the Batmobile makes the jump, Robin stands on one of the fingers and screams his head off. I guess this is supposed to be "dramatic".

The Freezemobile makes the jump and lands on the roof of a nearby building. His henchmen, however, are not so lucky, and go crashing directly into the building. Remind me why these guys work for Freeze, again?

As the Batmobile spends the better part of a minute sailing through the air, we see Freeze quip that "It's a cold town!" and blast the Batmobile with his Ice Cannon. Then we cut to Batman inside looking all shiver-y, so he hits an "eject" button and goes flying out of the car. As he hovers in the air, we see he's now roughly about 450 stories up.

The frozen Batmobile, however, still lands safely on the roof of the building. So what did Batman eject for? Anyway, Freeze looks at the Batmobile and starts laughing triumphantly. An instant later, he turns to his windshield and sees Batman flying directly at him [?]. Guys, Superman is the one who can fly. Not Batman. Remember?

Anyway, Batman crashes through the windshield, and in a weird moment, we're spared seeing the two of them duke it out, which would be really awkward in those costumes, anyway (but which we will still be seeing later, unfortunately), and we simply cut to Batman's cloak pulling back to reveal a subdued Freeze lying on the ground. Batman stands over him, with obvious rods planted in the seams of his cloak that allow to him to spread his wings like, well, a bat, actually.

Back at the Batcave, an undamaged Batmobile is rising up on the Bat Hydraulic Pedestal. If this is the same Batmobile we just saw a second ago, why doesn't it look all banged up? And if it's not the same one, how the hell many does Batman have? Either way, Robin runs up to the car and they have it out about how Batman disabled his motorcycle.

Robin mentions how when he was in "the Flying Graysons", they were truly a team and trusted each other. Batman argues that Robin was too distracted by Poison Ivy to do his job, but Robin barks back that "You just can't stand that maybe she wanted me instead of you!"

He criticizes Batman, saying it's always "your way or the highway! It's Batman and Robin, not Robin and Batman!" Yes, and it was also never Ebert and Siskel, but what's your point? Batman says that as long as Robin's living in his Batcave, he's got to follow his Bat Rules. Robin gets pissy, saying "This is no partnership!" as he storms off.

We cut to Alfred putting together an audio recording that will be his letter to his brother Wilfred. Naturally, we see some kind of nonsensical 3-D waveform on his computer screen that undulates as Alfred speaks. He finishes, then pulls out a CD [!] and locks it in a metal case. You mean, he's corresponding with his brother who's in a traveling court in India and riding on top of elephants, and he's *burning a CD* to send to him? Don't they have pen and paper in Comic Book World?

Bruce enters and Alfred happily tells him that "Batman monopolized the evening news!" Considering yesterday's top story was the donation of a diamond, this isn't all that surprising. Bruce, however, barely hears this because he's got something else on his mind. He asks, "Is it always my way or the highway?"

Alfred says, "Yes, actually!" but calls it quite reasonable. He explains that because fate took away his parents, Bruce has done everything in his power to control the fates. Alfred then gives the best speech in the movie when he says, "For what is Batman, if not an effort to master the chaos that sweeps our world? An attempt to control death itself?" Well, you'll just have to trust me, this is the best speech in the movie. All told, it seems like they were going for some kind of tribute to Michael Gough here, since they've given him all the good lines. By which I mean, all the lines that aren't puns.

Bruce then looks out a dark window as a daytime view of a gravestone materializes. We see a young Bruce and Alfred standing over it, and Little Bruce places some flowers on the grave. Ah, yes. Another wonderful, memorable event in the childhood of Bruce Wayne. He seriously must have had no life when he was a kid if this is the kind of stuff he remembers. Also, this means that Bruce's parents are buried right outside the mansion. This isn't unheard of, but it's still pretty damn creepy. No wonder he's still single. Anyway, Alfred's speech and Bruce's LSD flashback cause Bruce to come to the realization that he can't really control death.

Cut to Barbara sneaking into the Wayne Garage while silently rolling in a motorcycle. This time, Dick catches her, but in the darkness, she doesn't realize who it is and judo flips him to the ground. Tough Girl *rules*! She quickly apologizes, explaining that she learned judo at "Oxbridge" because "London's kind of rough!" Dick asks about the motorcycle, but she pretends she just took it out for a spin and quickly runs off.



Either that's dirt and bruises on her face, or Silverstone just pigged out on Ho-Hos right before the take.

We then see the sign for Arkham Asylum, which naturally is suddenly lit up by lightning. I have this feeling that it's always raining here, and there's just one storm cloud hanging above the asylum that never moves. As we cut to a wide shot, sure enough, there's a

rainstorm in the background as we close in on the castle-like asylum.

Inside, several of the asylum guards are marching Mr. Freeze through a corridor. Or, I should say, they're wheeling him through a corridor, because he currently happens to be inside of a refrigerator [!]. Hey, at least this will keep him at "zero degrees", right?

The guards bring the fridge into a cell, and an oddly familiar gravelly voice yells at them to "Drag him into the cold beam!" The "cold beam" turns out to be a blue light shining down from the ceiling to illuminate some water vapor mist. As a guard opens the fridge door, we see the gravelly voice belongs to future Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura [!!]. Jesse calls Freeze "Frost-Face", which I think is what he also called Hubert Humphrey III during their first debate. The other guard tells Freeze that "You're the common cold, and we're the cure!" Which doesn't make sense, but at least it contained a play on the word "cold".

Freeze, in yet another ancient movie cliché, is dressed in black and white striped prison clothes [!]. He says, "Allow me to break the ice." Yuk yuk. He tells the guards his name, and addressing the camera, instructs them to "Learn it well... For it's the chilling sound of your doom!" Or, rather, in Arnie-Speak: "Fuh itz deh chillen sown of yeh DOOOM!"

Suddenly, he butts the guard's heads together and tries to run off, but as soon as he gets out of the "cold beam", he collapses in pain. Jesse Ventura calls him "Freezie" and explains that he has to stay inside "the cold zone". Freeze desperately crawls back into the beam while Ventura tells the other guard to "look at him stew!" Huh?



William "Refrigerator" Perry finally pays his debt to society.

Next, we find Poison Ivy and Bane strolling through the streets of Gotham as they happen upon a condemned building. We know it's condemned because someone has written "Condemned" on the front in day-glo spray paint. Ivy notes the building once held Turkish baths [?] and says, "This looks promising!" Actually, this is fitting, since watching this movie feels like being locked in a Turkish prison.

Inside, there are some random thugs all wearing hooded black jumpsuits, with their faces all made up to look like neon day-glo skulls. They engage in random skullduggery (Hah!) which involves smacking each other around, and drinking a bottle of something that glows blue. All the fun screeches to a halt, however, when they hear Bane breaking in.

Ivy surveys the place, calling it a "fixer-upper", but then notes the Day-Glo Skulls and says, "A minus. Current tenants!" One Day-Glo Skull calls Ivy his "little pretty pretty pretty" and says she looks "good enough to eat!" (Just between you and me, I think Akiva Goldsman was having a much tougher time coming up with plant puns than ice puns.) Ivy

challenges them to "Come and get me!" as she pushes the NBA Jam Turbo Button on Bane's chest.

They all swing day-glo green chains at Bane, but he steps on a single wooden plank which somehow sends them all flying through the air [?]. And I kid you not, this event is actually accompanied by a *Loony Toons* slide whistle sound effect [!]. Now, if only we could get the "wahh wahh wahhhh" trombone from *Tom and Jerry* we'd be all set.

Anyway, all the Day-Glo Skulls run off, never to be seen or heard from again in this movie. Who were these guys? Why the day-glo color scheme? Couldn't they have just put some normal bums in here? Oh, right. Comic Book Movie.

Once they're gone, Ivy announces that she's going to "redecorate", and we spend several minutes pointlessly watching them do that. Finally, she tells Bane to put his Paul Stanley-style seven-inch heel through the floor to expose some dirt.



"You really like my limousine / You like the way the wheels roll..."

Crouching down, Ivy says that "It took God seven days to create Paradise!" In which version of the Bible does it say that? She opens up her hand, revealing a handful of glittering "seeds" that look like foil-wrapped chocolate almonds. "Let's see if I can do better!" She drops the chocolate almonds into the dirt, and we watch as a whole host of CGI vines instantly sprout and grow several feet high.

Then she chats up Bane, telling him all about Freeze, who according to her is a "cool customer" with an "icy demeanor". She inexplicably calls Bane "honey" and tells him to "clean up this mess. We've got company coming!" Bane growls, "Honeyyyy. Companyyyy." After viewing this film, you too will begin thinking and speaking like Bane.

We next find Bruce at Wayne Manor having dinner with Julie Madison (unfortunately, still played by Elle Macpherson, whose Australian accent is now leaking out all over the place), and she wants to talk about relationship stuff. Apparently, they've been together a year, and she's decided she wants to marry Bruce. When she tells him this, Bruce shows no hint of a reaction on his face, and after a moment only replies that he's "not the marrying kind". I mean, check out the graves of his parents right outside the bedroom window if you want proof of *that*.

He indirectly refers to all the stuff in his life that she doesn't know about, but she responds that she understands he's had his "wild nights". Bruce chuckles. "'Wild' doesn't quite cover it." No, stupid, tedious, and overblown are pretty much the words I would have chosen.

Julie says she "can't wait forever", and as she's talking, Bruce starts to zone out and daydream that Poison Ivy is there instead. Just like a man, huh? Then we cut to an extremely bored Julie asking who "Ivy" is. Apparently, Bruce just called her "Ivy" somewhere in there, but we didn't get to see it. When she demands to know who this Ivy chick is, all he says is, "I wish I knew." That's the way to comfort a gal, Bruce.

We then find Dick in his room using a computer to examine a newspaper photo of Ivy. Suddenly, he gets an "instant message" on his screen that, amazingly, isn't porn spam. It tells him that the "Garage Motion Sensor" has been set off, and that the computer will be "Switching to Infrared Tracking Camera" now. Apparently, "infrared" means photo negative, because that's what we see on screen as a chubby negative image runs around in the garage near the motorcycles.

Dick runs into the garage just as Barbara is hauling ass out of there on a motorcycle. So much for that ritual of silently rolling the bike out, I guess. He quickly goes to follow, and we immediately cut to the seedy part of Gotham. We know it's the "seedy part" because we hear an "urban" song on the soundtrack, and bright day-glo faces are being projected on the sides of buildings [?]. Various biker guys are milling about, making this place more than a little reminiscent of the Incinerator in the aforementioned *Never Too Young to Die*.

We pan across the freaks, or gangs, or whatever the hell they are, and it appears each little group has its own gimmick. First, there are guys in Amadeus wigs wearing eye patches and suits with bow ties. Then there are some guys dressed exactly like the droogs in *A Clockwork Orange*. Are you laughing yet?

Then there are some women dressed like the cast of *Cats*, and then your standard leather jacket and bandana-wearing Latino outfit. Rounding out the scene are the Pink Ladies from *Grease* [!]. Nearby, some biker freaks are handing money over to a guy in a *Road Warrior*-esque coat with a woman on each arm. This guy turns out to be played by Coolio [!!!].

Barbara calls him "Banker" and asks him "How much coin to play?" She pays up and some guy in a skull and crossbones bandana notices that she was the one who won a race here before. He promises that tonight's competition is way out of her league, and tough girl that she is, she makes a little side bet with him.



Alicia and Coolio compare notes about their respective appearances on VH-1's *Where Are They Now?*

Skull And Crossbones Bandana Guy then goes over to his fan club, where we learn that his name is Spike and that he wants a member of his posse to "make sure the guys are ready at the end of the bridge!" (Spike, by the way, is being played by Nicky Katt, who

until recently could be seen as Harry Senate on *Boston Public*. Of course, *V* fanatics like me will always remember him as Mike Donovan's son Sean in the weekly series.)

Dick soon shows up on his motorcycle, spying on Barbara from a distance. He puts down the visor on his helmet, revealing that, hilariously, he's got a *red bird design* airbrushed on there. That doesn't seem particularly smart. He enters the race just as Barbara and all the other competitors line up at the gate, and eventually, Coolio shoots a starter pistol and they're off.



Oh, no, that's not compromising your secret identity AT ALL.

They fly through the streets of Gotham, and for some reason, sparks are shooting off of everything they drive past. This race goes on for several tedious minutes, and might I add, has *absolutely nothing to do with the plot*? That's right, basically this sequence has been stuck in here to provide further proof of Barbara's tough girl street creds, and also to let us know that she can ride a motorcycle. And that's about it.

Amazingly, however, the race seems to mostly comply with the laws of physics, and all the jumps appear to be real stunts performed without the benefit of wires. So, while this sequence might be utterly pointless, it's not actively pissing me off, which just might make it one of the best scenes in the movie.

Soon we hear Spike yelling things like "Out of my way, you loser!" and "Not bad for a chick!" After knocking a few people off their bikes, Spike yells "Now!" and suddenly a bunch of freaks swing out on wires (and here, these wires are actually *supposed* to be obvious) and throw flaming whiskey bottles into the path of the bikers. Naturally, this causes a huge inferno of green [?] flames.

Dick and Barbara pass through the flames and end up tumbling off their bikes. The two go sliding down a bridge, which suddenly turns out to be unfinished. Spike calls out, "End of the line, sweetheart!" So, um, does this mean he wins? And how does he expect to collect on that side bet after she plunges off a bridge and dies?

We see the end of the bridge, and it should come as no surprise that it leads to a drop off of about 600 stories. Okay, how in the hell did they get all the way up here during a *street race*? Dick grabs hold of Barbara's leg, and right as they're about to fly off, his foot just happens to catch on a bent piece of rebar and the two hang there.

Barbara's helmet then falls off, probably so we can fully appreciate her reaction when Dick takes a moment to remove his own helmet and say, "So, this is where you hang out!" Barbara, who's only being saved from horrible bloody death by the strength of Dick's ankle, just lets off an annoyed groan. Yeah, if I'm about to plunge 600 stories, about the

last thing I'd want to hear in my final moments is a stupid pun.

Back at Wayne Manor, Dick quizzes Barbara about her racing. She explains that she's been doing it ever since her parents died because it "made the pain go away." Yeah, right. If that were the case, you would have seen a lot of people taking up street racing immediately after this movie came out.

Apparently, her racing is the reason why she was kicked out of "Oxbridge", but now she's finally won enough money to pay Alfred off for supporting her. With the dirt on her face looking more and more like stubble by the minute, she tells Dick that she wants to rescue Alfred from "this dismal life of servitude!"

Dick takes offense at this, and insists that Alfred's like a part of the family. Barbara isn't buying into all this domestic servant jazz, however, and implies that Alfred is somehow degrading himself by being a butler. Dick says Alfred's happy, but Barbara counters that he's not, and what's more, he's actually sick.

She runs off, and Bruce suddenly appears and confirms this, adding that Alfred is in fact dying. And how does he know this? "I can tell." Oh, okay, that settles it then.

Over at Arkham Asylum, we find Freeze fashioning a sculpture out of an icicle using a sharp piece of metal. Yes, that's a good thing to give to a prisoner in a mental institution. Then we see him grab a clock and rip off the face, exposing the gears underneath. This is also a good thing to give to inmates. Then he picks up a glass, which is also... well, you get the point.

Anyway, from the glass, the icicle, and the gears, he fashions a rotating ice sculpture of his wife [!]. Of course, the sculpture is twice as big as the piece of ice we just saw him carving, but I'm sure they were counting on nobody in the audience really paying that much attention by this point.



Well, we got a regular MacGyver over here, now don't we?

A guard tells Freeze that he has a visitor in the form of his "sister", and Freeze is confused by this. The door opens, and it turns out to be Poison Ivy, all decked out in Robin Hood-wannabe green tights with her hair fashioned into a pair of bright red cones. And no one at Arkham considers this outfit unusual? "Brother, dear," Ivy says in her un-seductive voice, "I heard you were blue." Hah hah. I'd like my cyanide pills now.

The guards, already smitten with Ivy, become even more infatuated when she blows Lik-M-Aid in their faces. She tells them that she is "to die for" and kisses them both, causing both of them to keel over dead. And, thankfully, this is the last of the state

governors that we'll be seeing in this movie. [**April 2004 Note:** This review was originally posted in November of 2002, and yes, I know this joke is now out of date. So stop emailing me already!]

We cut to Arkham's "Criminal Property Locker", and "cleverly", both Two Face's coat and the Riddler's suit from *Batman Forever* are in here. At least, I'm assuming that suit belongs to the Riddler. For all I know, maybe they finally locked up Matthew Lesko.

There's one lone guard in here, and he just happens to be sitting with his back to a window. Yep, a window. In an insane asylum. With no bars on it. Naturally, Bane shows up, reaches through the window, and pulls the guard through.

We cut back to Freeze staring at the dead Jesse Ventura and seeming to be impressed. Ivy calls him "my most unabominable snowman!" and offers to team up with him. Freeze takes a moment to mull it over. You know, for a jail break, these two don't seem to be in that much of a hurry to go anywhere.

Then we cut to Bane, rushing through the corridors of Arkham with a grocery cart [?] filled with Freeze's cryo-suit. Guards are trying to stop him, probably because this is the express lane and he's got eleven items, but Bane quickly knocks them all to the wayside. So, I guess shooting at people has been banned at Arkham?

Back in Freeze's cell, he's still considering Ivy's offer to team up. He asks what she wants in return, and in response she actually looks down at his crotch [!!]. I guess this proves that old adage about "shrinkage" in cold weather to be just a myth.

She says they need to "cool it for now" as she lets Bane in. Freeze sees his suit in the cart and cries out, "A laundry service that delivers! Wow!" Yuk yuk. We then cut to Freeze all suited up, and Ivy asks if he's "about a fifty big and tall." Freeze replies, "I always go a size smaller. Makes me look slimmer!" Buh-dum-bum-*tish*. Actually, given all the dumb sound effects we've heard so far, a rimshot would have hardly been unexpected after that line.

They hear a noise and find the guards trying to weld their way into the cell. Freeze sees his suit is running low on power and says that he needs more diamonds from his hideout. Ivy says, "I'll help you grab your rocks!" and the way she says it, you know she's really talking about his jewels, and not his diamonds, if you know what I mean.

She pushes Bane's NBA Jam Turbo Button and commands him to bust through the exterior wall. When that doesn't work, she chirps, "Reinforced steel! Not good!" This prompts Freeze to run to a faucet and spray something at it that somehow causes all the pipes to freeze. "Always winterize your pipes!" he quips.

The pipes shatter, and conveniently, this causes a big hole to open up right in the brick wall that Bane was attempting to smash. Ivy scurries out, only to find the first step is a killer since they appear to be about 700 feet up. Well, what did she expect to find out here, an escalator down?

Freeze says he's going to go get his diamonds, and tells her and Bane (referring to him as "Meatloaf" [??]) to go get his wife. Ivy is pissed to finally hear that he's married. I know, it's always the best ones, isn't it? Anyway, to escape, they all jump, falling all 700 feet to the water below and yet somehow remaining unharmed. The guards finally get in, and for the first time they actually start shooting, but they're too late.





"Yeah... that's it! I'll join the same political party as Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot! That's a great idea! And then... I'll do play by play for the XFL! It all makes so much sense now!"

Back at Wayne Manor, Bruce tries to chat up Alfred about his Movie Illness, but Alfred gets all British on him and doesn't want to talk about it. Bruce then asks if he's ever regretted working for the Wayne family, so Alfred turns to him and says "Are you kidding me? I'm the *butler for Batman and Robin, for fuck's sake!!*" Or words to that effect. And by "words to that effect", I mean he doesn't say anything like that, but that's the general gist of it. Dick then runs in to break the news about Freeze's prison escape.

We see the Bat Signal in the air as Batman and Robin show up at Freeze's hideout to meet with Commissioner Gordon. Gordon shows them footage of Freeze's escape from Arkham, and Robin sees that Poison Ivy was there. Gordon then shows them a goofy black and white photo of Ivy and Bane arriving on a plane from South America, showing an uncanny resemblance to Liz and Dick jetting in from Paris.

Gordon tells them all about the people Ivy's killed, including a very late bit of exposition about a businessman she poisoned (offscreen) for the purpose of stealing his limo. Batman wonders why Freeze and Ivy would team up. "Well," Robin offers, "She's definitely evil!" That about sums it up, then. Thanks, Dick.

Batman and Robin then talk privately, both suddenly incredulous that they thought they were in love with her. Robin can't believe that they were "fighting over a bad guy!" An annoyed Batman corrects him: "Bad, yes. Guy, no!" I mean, we gotta make that clear, right, boys?

The two then agree that they're over her. "Great stems, though," Batman says. Robin adds, "Buds, too." The only stems and buds involved here are the ones in Akiva Goldsman's bong when he wrote this crap.

Batman somehow figures out that to access Freeze's secret chamber that holds his wife's mannequin, he has to go into the walk-in freezer, move a TV dinner aside, and push a button. How did he even know the secret chamber was there, much less figure out how to get into it? Whatever. Anyway, Robin recognizes Nora Fries floating in her vat of bubbling water. Batman passes over a vent in the floor, and the camera pans down to show that Freeze and Ivy are in there, hiding in an oddly spacious room underneath the grating.

Batman goes to a computer and pushes buttons at random, which of course causes scrolling screens of blinking text and graphics to flash past his eyes. Apparently, these are Freeze's "experiment results" on MacGregor's Syndrome, and the words "Cure Found" are blinking on the screen, I guess to remind Freeze that he found a cure.

Batman says that Freeze has used his "freezing technology" to cure an early stage of MacGregor's, which I guess would be the "lip quivering" stage of the disease. (Oops! Hope I didn't give anything away!) Meanwhile, down below, Freeze and Ivy split up: She'll get his "snowy bride" while he gets his diamonds, then they'll meet up at Ivy's Turkish bath hideout afterwards.

Up above, Batman and Robin are talking as pink and purple Lik-M-Aid comes flowing out of an air vent. At first, they don't see it, and only smell it, but then they both turn and see it flowing out of the air vent. So, can they see the dust, or not? This is never made clear. Either way, they lift the cover on the vent and head down.

Meanwhile, Freeze somehow appears in the main room of his hideout and sees police swarming the place. The very, very astute cops, however, don't spot him. Freeze goes to a lever marked "Freeze" on one side, and "Heat" on the other, and pulls it to "Freeze". This causes white gas to steam out of every open vent, and we know this is Something Bad because we hear cops yell, "My lungs! My lungs are freezing!" Yes, that's right: Cops are *yelling* that their *lungs are freezing*. The feasibility of this will be left as an exercise to the reader. They all start falling to the ground as Freeze loads rocks of crack cocaine, I mean diamonds into his suit and gets high, or in his words, "Chilled to perfection!"

Now we get what's easily the most contrived dialogue in the whole movie, and that's saying a lot. Batman and Robin climb down through the vent in Freeze's secret chamber, and when there's no sign of Poison Ivy, Batman says, "No beauty." Then, Bane suddenly appears with a roar, and Robin adds, "Just the beast!" Hey, it's a good thing Batman just happened to refer to Ivy as a "beauty", isn't it? Otherwise, Robin would have never gotten the opportunity to turn it into a great pun on *Beauty and the Beast*.



But if you really want to see a "tale as old as time", look no further than this movie.

Robin takes on Bane and quickly gets tossed down some stairs, so Batman steps up to take a shot. Suddenly, Ivy appears beside Robin, calling him a "pretty birdie". She blows some more dust on him to render him helpless and asks, "Polly want a kiss?" Suddenly, after these bird puns, I'm liking the plant and ice puns a lot more.

Bane vs. Batman ends with Batman getting tossed over a railing and landing on the ground next to Robin. This snaps Robin out of his trance, and he pulls away before Ivy can kiss him. Robin staggers off to go fight Bane, apparently so that Ivy and Batman can have some "alone time". She climbs over to him and utters this immortal line:

Poison Ivy: There's something about an anatomically correct rubber suit that puts fire in a girl's lips!

Isn't there, though? She blows some more dust on him, and Batman, who by the way is supposed to be an experienced crimefighter here, doesn't try to hold his breath or move away from the dust. However, he does pull away before she can kiss him. Meanwhile, Bane is squeezing the life out of Robin (Whatever life there was in him in the first place), and he eventually knocks him out.

Back down on the ground, Ivy tells Batman, "I'm a lover, not a fighter!" (Which keenly predicts the "Girl Is Mine"-level dispute that Batman and Robin will be having shortly.) Then she points to Bane with her foot [?] and says, "That's why every Poison Ivy action figure comes complete with him!" I'm surprised she doesn't also add, "Get one free with every Burger King Big Kids Meal!" Ivy bids Batman farewell while Bane comes over to put the hurt on him.

Up in Freeze's hideout, Commissioner Gordon has located the Freeze/Heat switch and flipped it back to "Heat". Which begs the question: Why would Mr. Freeze have a "Heat" setting in his own hideout? Yes, it does appear that this place used to be an ice cream factory. But why would *they* have a "Heat" setting? (But then again, I guess this would come in handy if they ever needed to liquidate their inventory. Hah!)

Anyway, now that the "Heat" is on, everything starts glowing red [?], and all the cops instantly revive from getting their lungs frozen to go after Freeze. He's about to grab his Ice Cannon when suddenly cops come swarming, and he of course wastes some time shoving them around. And, strangely enough, not one shot is fired here, either. There must be a citywide ban on being mean to supercriminals.

Down below, Robin finally recovers from Bane's bear hug and gets up, only to find himself face to face with Ivy as she blows more dust in his face. As expected, Robin inhales deeply. (Stop doing that!) Ivy tells him he shouldn't be "living in the shadow of the big, bad bat", and that he should have his "own big, bright signal in the sky!"

Meanwhile, it's Bane vs Batman: The Rematch, and Batman wins this time. Robin is once again just about to kiss Ivy when Batman runs up and tells him to stop. Batman has finally thought about how all of Ivy's victims were poisoned orally, and he's realized that she has poisoned lips. When Robin hears this, he stupidly scoffs, "You have some real issues with women, you know that?" Oh, brother.

Robin is convinced that Batman is just jealous and starts taking swings at him [!!] while Ivy quietly creeps away. Batman grabs Robin and tosses him over a railing into a big uncovered vat of green goo. Let's hope this isn't the same stuff the Joker fell into, huh? Actually, I'm guessing it's melted mint ice cream, but no one ever says.

Ivy bids Batman farewell, and incredibly, Batman just stands there and does nothing to stop her from leaving [!]. Instead, he helps Robin out of the vat of ice cream. Okay, I could understand letting the criminal escape when Robin was a Popsicle. But when he's just stuck in a vat of ice cream? What was the danger there, that he would accidentally inhale a pistachio nut?

When Robin gets out, however, he's still pissed. He announces that he's "going solo" and storms off all covered in green slime like he just came from a taping of *Double Dare*. Commissioner Gordon appears, and he's understandably angry that all the villains got away for no apparent reason. He asks Batman what happened, but Batman just stands there since he obviously has no explanation other than "Robin and I are dumbasses."



"That's right, I'm gonna be the next [Toxic Avenger](#)!"

We cut to Ivy who, strangely, has not left Freeze's hideout completely, but has entered the secret chamber where Freeze is keeping his wife. And Batman's *still* not trying to catch her? She kicks away a cable that powers the vat keeping Nora Fries alive, saying that she doesn't like "competition". She adds, "Who needs a frigid wife, anyway?" Yes, because it's so much better to offer your "honey pot" to everyone you meet, isn't it?

Back at Ivy's flora-covered hideout, Ivy and Bane enter and find one of the rooms has been completely converted into a icy chamber with huge ice stalagmites everywhere. Inside, Freeze is pouring random fluids into beakers and Ivy sarcastically tells him to "make yourself right at home." Freeze ignores her, wanting to know where Wifey is, but Ivy says that Batman "deactivated her". He doesn't believe this, so Ivy offers up Nora's snowflake necklace as proof.

Now, check this out. To dramatize Freeze's grief over the loss of his wife, we cut to an extreme close-up of his closed eyes as a very obviously CGI tear streams out. It freezes on his face, then dissipates completely. Uh, okay. I guess we should be thankful that's all they did. They could have actually had Arnie try to *act* here. (But, unfortunately, that's still coming up later.)

Freeze then goes on the warpath, promising that Batman and Robin's "bones will turn to ice! Their blood will freeze in my hands!" Ivy likes the idea, but says "the society that created them" should not go "unpunished". Freeze is totally digging on this same vibe: "If I must suffer," he says, "Humanity will suffer with me!" I can't think of a better explanation for why I wrote this review in the first place.

He promises to subject the city to "endless winter", or this movie, whichever lasts longer. "First, Gotham," he says, retrieving the Gotham snow globe. (Aren't you glad the existence of this globe was established earlier?) "Then... the world!"

Ivy is all like, 'you must be reading my mind dude' and says she too is looking forward to "everything dead on earth except us! A chance for Mother Nature to start again!" For no reason, when she says "Mother Nature", she points at herself in a really bizarre Kabuki-esque gesture.

"Behold the dawn of a new age!" she says, beckoning Bane forward. He hands her a plant in a glass case that looks exactly like a miniature version of Audrey II from *Little Shop of Horrors*. Are you laughing yet? She tells Freeze that this is one of many mutant vicious plants she's created, and that "Once you have frozen mankind, these babies will overrun the globe!" Um, for what purpose? Why does Ivy want any of this? Could she be simply...

evil?

Ivy then says they'll be the only two people left on earth. "Yes," Freeze says. "Adam... and Evil!" (Hey, so I guess I was right!) He tells her to keep Batman and Robin busy while he prepares to freeze Gotham City. To add emphasis to this, he crushes the Gotham snow globe in his hand. Well, just pretend that that added some emphasis to what he just said.



"I do believe Marsellus Wallace, my husband, your boss, told you to take *me* out and do whatever I wanted!"

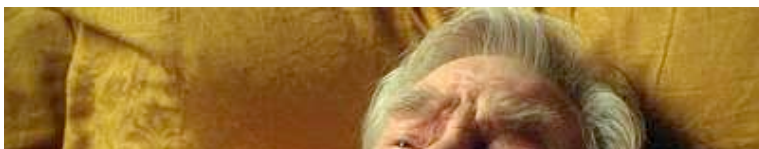
Back at Wayne Manor, Alfred is lying in bed suffering from his Movie Illness while a Movie Doctor with the prerequisite black leather bag looks him over. Movie Doctor finishes his examination and tells Dick and Barbara that it's "Stage 1 of MacGregor's Syndrome." MacGregor's Syndrome, huh? Where have I heard of that before? The doc says, "Bummer, dude", or words to that effect, and jets out of there. Later on, Bruce comes home and creepily watches Alfred taking shallow breaths.

We cut to Bruce and Dick talking. Dick has apparently read a book or something, because he's suddenly realized that both Alfred and Nora Fries have the same disease. Bruce knows this already, explaining that even though Freeze has the cure, they don't know what it is. Ah, but enough of all that "my most trusted friend is dying" stuff, Bruce has got to go to a "dedication", and after that he's going to "go after Freeze and Ivy alone."

Dick bristles at this, asking why Bruce doesn't want him along. Then he pretty much answers his own question by saying, "You just want her for yourself, don't you?" Bruce tries to talk sense into Dick, but Dick arrogantly says, "She loves me and not you! And it's driving you crazy!" And don't waste your time, because the doggone girl is mine!

Bruce says Dick is "not thinking straight", but Dick says he is. Oh, he's definitely thinking "straight", alright. As proof, he starts spouting off about how there's going to be a "Robin signal in the sky!" and insists once again that he's going solo. Well, stop talking about it and just *do* it, already. It's not like you two are John and Paul and teenage girls all over the world are going to be crying if you break up.

We cut to Barbara at Alfred's bedside, apologizing to him because she was "too late", whatever that means. In response, Alfred makes a truly comical "suffering from Movie Illness" face like he just read the rest of the script.





If you think this is bad, just wait until he finds out he has to come back for another sequel.

Alfred then pulls out a metal case containing the CD he burned for Wilfred. He gives it to Barbara and asks her to track Wilfred down and give it to him. Alfred says that he has "duties" that he wants Wilfred to take over for him, obviously referring to whatever the hell he does for Batman and Robin when he's not spouting off trite homilies.

Barbara wants to know what's on the CD. Alfred says, "It is the sacred trust of two good men whom I have the honor of calling 'son'. Take it to Wilfred, and I implore you, never open it!" Then, having finished with all that deathbed wish stuff, he casually changes the subject and tells her she looks like her mother. For the record, she doesn't.

We return to the Gotham Observatory, and I'm reminded of how much I'd really love to know how people get up there. We again hear the annoying voice of Gossip Gertie as she welcomes people to the dedication ceremony of the *dues ex machina*, I mean, the telescope that Bruce is donating.

She introduces Bruce, who enters with Julie on his arm as he makes some idle chatter with Commissioner Gordon. Meanwhile, a huge group of reporters is gathered around and hanging on every word. Another slow news day in Gotham, I presume? There's two superpowered killers on the loose, you say?

Off in the corner, Ivy appears in her Plain Chick disguise, and she eventually works her way over to ask Commissioner Gordon where the Bat Signal is. Then, she makes a huge gesture out of flipping open her compact and using it to blow dust in his face, and Gordon just stands there and inhales it all. Commissioner, did you know that there's a killer out there who uses pheromone dust to subdue her victims? Did you get that memo?

Gordon takes in a lungful and happily tells Ivy that it's on top of police headquarters. Did she really need to mesmerize him to figure that out? Seriously, where else would the Bat Signal be? Gordon pulls out a big ring of keys and asks if she wants to see it. Then, in gratuitous slow-mo, we see Ivy again unfold her compact and blow. Dust, I mean. Right into the camera. Pardon the dumb question, but why did she have to do this again?

Oh, I see. It's so that this time, the dust can waft over in Bruce's direction and make him aware of Ivy's presence. Yeah, silly me. Bruce glances around, looking for her. Meanwhile, Ivy takes the keys from Gordon and goes to kiss him, but then stops herself. "On second thought, you're way too old for me!"

Gordon suddenly turns into a pathetic, feeble old man who's about ten seconds away from crapping his pants. He moans, "No, I'm not... Please... Come back..." I can't even put into words how completely unnecessary this part was. Can you imagine what they said to Pat Hingle before filming this? "Yeah, sorry, Mr. Hingle, but right now we can only afford to give a non-humiliating role to *one* veteran actor who's endured all four of these movies. But don't worry, because in the next movie you get to have a really dramatic scene with

King Tut!"

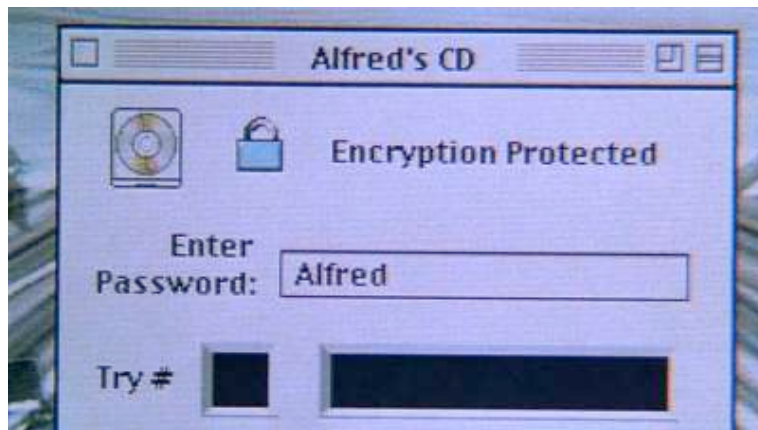
Anyway, Ivy makes her way out of the observatory as Bruce spots her. Idiotically, he can't make the Pamela Isley-Poison Ivy connection and just walks off to show Julie "how the satellites work".

We next find Freeze's hockey henchmen filing into Ivy's hideout with the Ice Cannon. Freeze tells them he's going to turn Gotham into "an icy graveyard" and then, "I will pull Batman's heart from his body..." And show it to him? "And feel it freeze in my hands!" He then lets out a Boisterous Evil Laugh and yells, "Revenge!" Oh, is that what this is all about? I wouldn't have gotten that.

Then we cut to Ivy and Bane on the roof of police headquarters. Ivy pushes Bane's NBA Jam Turbo Button and he goes over and rips the Bat Signal off the roof. She quips, "Let there be light!" which makes no sense at all. Also, in this scene, the Bat Signal is clearly *on*. Why wouldn't Batman have already shown up?

We then find Barbara honoring Alfred's deathbed wishes by prying open the metallic CD case that was meant only for Wilfred. Apparently, the instructions "I implore you, never open it!" were too vague for her. Talking to herself, she rationalizes this ignoble act by saying, "I'm family." Oh, okay. That makes it all better, then.

She plops the CD into the drive of an iBook and gets prompted for a password. The first one she tries is "Alfred". (Yes, you laugh now, but the real password will turn out to be even dumber.) Of course, we only know this because we can plainly see the password as she types it. Wow, why don't more password boxes work this way?



Ooh! Ooh! Try "FATHER"! No! No! "THE END"!

Meanwhile, Bruce has come back home and gone to Alfred's room for another "heartwarming" scene. These little soul-baring sessions between the two men almost worked the first three or four times we saw them, but at this point they're just beating a dead Alfred here.

Bruce says he's spent his entire life trying to defeat death, but unfortunately, "I can't save you." Then he adds, "And with great power comes great responsibility. Oh, wait, wrong movie." Alfred, probably feeling the effects of his Movie Illness, lets off a total stream of non sequiters about how there's "no defeat in death" because "victory comes in defending what we know is right while we still live!" (Translation pending.)

Bruce turns away and has another pointless flashback, because the adjacent room is apparently where Alfred once read Little Bruce a bedtime story. Not only is this a

completely unremarkable memory, but it's also starting to appear that Bruce has no good memories of Alfred past the age of seven. I guess after this point, Alfred turned into a violent raging coke fiend or something.

The two say they love each other and embrace in a moment that appears to be taken from another, much better movie. Meanwhile, Barbara is still tending to her dying uncle's last wishes by trying to hack into his CD. We see the next password she's trying: "England". One has to wonder how many other countries she tried before she got to that one. Also, for no reason, the iBook is talking to her, and every time she gets it wrong Majel Roddenberry says "Access Denied." Okay, it's not Majel, but it might as well be.

Barbara then spots her mom's picture on the desk and says, "Margaret..." Then a light bulb comes on. "Margaret!" Wow, and the picture is only sitting on the desk *right in front of you*. How long did it take you to come up with *that* one? Unfortunately, that's not the password, either.

Then, Margaret's signature of "Love, Peg" suddenly materializes on the picture. Yes, I know this is actually Barbara flashing back to Alfred's copy of the picture, because if you look closely, the frame is suddenly different. Unfortunately, the way this is filmed makes it look like it's just a big honking continuity error. Hats off to you, Mr. Schumacher!

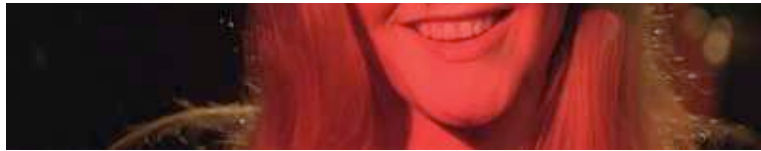
Anyway, she sees the signature, and it finally comes to her: "Peg!" She types that in, and yep, it's the correct password. That's right, Alfred's CD, which holds sensitive information about Batman and Robin, including their secret identities and the location of the Batcave, all of that was protected by a three-letter word that can be found in any dictionary. Suddenly, Bruce seems a lot more sensible for not really trusting people.

Anyway, now that Barbara's entered the right password, the computer's voice says, "Access Allowed!", and suddenly becomes really sultry and seductive. Why, Alfred, you salty dog, you. Then we get a shot of Barbara as everything on the computer screen is now being projected on her face [!!]. Honestly, I don't think this could happen unless she removed the glass from the monitor. Regardless, you'd expect the projected images to be the reverse of whatever she sees on the screen, right? Yeah, that's what you'd think, but then again, you're not Joel Schumacher.

We then get a shot of the computer screen, and find wireframe CGI models of the Batmobile and Redbird bouncing and floating around the screen like a really gaudy screensaver. (This is even more obnoxious than those dancing chipmunks.) If I didn't know any better, I'd swear Alfred was secretly trying to send his brother Wilfred into an epileptic seizure.

Then, we see nothing but red projected on Barbara's face, until suddenly the Bat and Robin Logos fly into view and slam together just like in the opening credits [!]. This means they're actually projecting this movie onto her face! Barbara gets a really giddy smile as she absorbs all of this information.





Insert your own joke here about now being able to project a movie on Silverstone's ass.

Cut to the Freezemobile rolling down the streets of Gotham, and in the background, it's hard not to notice a bar and grill called "The Fireplace" that actually has flames shooting out of its windows [!]. You'd think this might be something of a safety hazard. Then the Freezemobile pulls up in front of a place called "The Head Room", and this is actually a weird precursor to a *very* weird moment that will happen in just a few minutes.

Inside the Freezemobile, Mr. Freeze and Bane look up at the Gotham Observatory, and Freeze comments, "The combined power of the telescope's reflecting crystals [?] will complete my freezing engine!" He then "humorously" says, "No matter what anyone says, Mr. Bane, it *is* the size of your gun that counts!" Yuk yuk. Bane growls, "Guunnnn." Shhoooot. Blowww uppp. Gooood. Thiinkinng liiikke Joeeel Schuumacccher noowww.

In the skies over Gotham, a red Robin Signal appears. Bruce finds Dick already changed into his costume and heading out, even though he seems well aware that Ivy's behind the new signal. Bruce then takes the time to explain that she's really Pamela Isley, whom he saw talking to Commissioner Gordon, which must mean Ivy's the one who changed the signal. Which part of this didn't Robin (or the audience) know already?

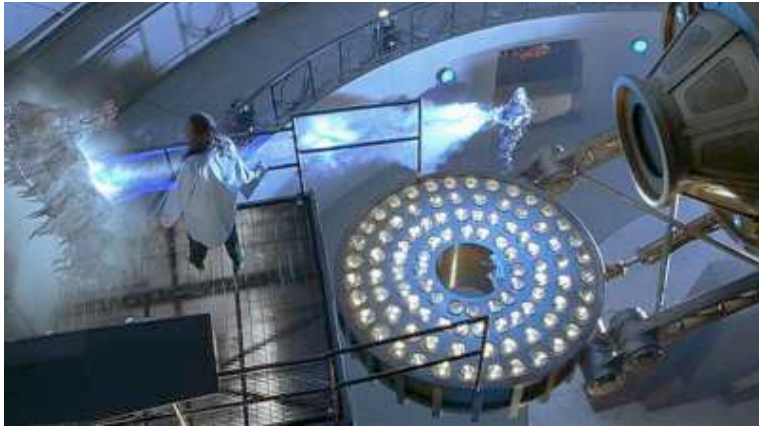
Dick says she did it "for love", but Bruce tries to convince him that she's "infected us with some sort of pheromone extract!" Huh? "Infected" you? With pheromones? You know, I'm just gonna let that one slide. Bruce says, "She wants to kill you, *Dick!*" and I'm almost 100% sure that his harsh emphasis on the word *Dick* was intentional. But with this movie, it's hard to tell.

Dick says that Bruce would do "anything to keep her away from me!" So Bruce, with his head wagging around worse than Torgo, repeats what Dick said earlier about trusting your partner and throws it right back in his face. Bruce says, "Friend, partner, brother!" Lend me your ears! "Will you trust *me* now?" Dick just stares at him.

Back at the observatory, two white-coated scientists are on a catwalk, seeming to be the only ones there, being that it's the dead of night and everything. There's one scientist who looks like Robin Quivers, and she tells the other scientist, a really smug Asian guy, that "all the crystals are in place!" To illustrate, we cut to the supposed reflecting crystals, looking like a giant diamond-studded donut.

Suddenly, Freeze and Bane stroll in, and Freeze makes some dumb wisecracks that aren't even worth repeating, much less making fun of. Smug Asian Guy calls Freeze a "nutball" (ouch!) so Freeze fires the Ice Cannon at him. Robin Quivers screams, so Freeze aims his Cannon at her and we actually hear a sound like a gun being cocked [!]. This is even less effective than the "horn blare ripped from the 60's TV show" and "cash register" sound effects in terms of actual humor produced.

Anyway, Freeze just freezes her too and laughs evilly, while Bane walks around with glowing crystals that look to have been stolen from the Fortress of Solitude. Bane places them on top of random machinery, for mood lighting I guess. Meanwhile, Freeze is using a lift to bring him up to the Jewel-Encrusted Donut.



Mmmm... donuts...

He then holds up a diamond-studded device that looks like a dumbbell you could buy at Tiffany's, if Tiffany's sold dumbbells. He sticks it in the Donut, touches a button, and one of the diamonds in the dumbbell lights up and starts shooting a laser into the telescope and... *sigh*. Why am I even bothering? How about this: He puts the whatzit in the whoozit and Bad Stuff starts happening. Fair enough?

Freeze pronounces that "Tonight, hell freezes over!" I'll leave it up to all of you to decide which event in this movie prompted this to happen. Trust me, there are more than enough possible candidates. Anyway, he lets out another Boisterous Evil Laugh as CGI icicles start forming all over the observatory.

Down in the Batcave, we find Barbara has broken in using the information she found on Alfred's CD. She stands on the rotating Bat Logo pedestal while a fan blows her hair around and laser lights shoot at her from every direction. If this is supposed to be a motion detector, it needs a lot of work.

A wall slides open to reveal the viewscreen, and for some reason, it has a huge, animated image of Alfred on it. Viewscreen Alfred keeps repeating, "Intruder alert!" until Barbara runs up to the screen and starts talking to it like it's a human being.

Viewscreen Alfred says he expected her to break in [?], so he programmed his "brain algorithms [*cough*]" into the Bat Computer and created a virtual simulation!" His hair appears to be slicked back into one solid mass here, and as he talks his voice stutters somewhat. So it appears that this movie, for no apparent reason, is staging an homage to Coca-Cola pitchman Max Headroom [!!]. There's nothing quite like timely parody, is there? The last of those commercials was in what, 1988? By the way, this now explains the shot of the "Head Room" bar that the Freezemobile was parked in front of. Or maybe "explains" is the wrong word.

Barbara tells Alfred Headroom that she wants to help Batman and Robin. Why? Are they in any trouble? I mean, other than from their own blatant stupidity, which doesn't seem like anything new. Regardless, Alfred anticipated this and "took the liberty to create something in your size!" He ordered from the chubby girl section of the Sears catalog and everything. Barbara cries out, "Suit me up, Uncle Alfred!" And then we cut to her... suiting herself up.

This is played exactly like Batman and Robin suiting up at the very beginning, right down to yet another gratuitous butt shot. This sequence is slightly different, however, because now Schumacher can give us a gratuitous *boob* shot. We zoom in on a pair of pointy cups that are scarier than the cones Madonna wore in *Truth or Dare*.

Meanwhile, Robin pulls up on his bike and finds the Robin Signal sitting in an alley right outside Ivy's Turkish bath hideout. The door opens for him and he just blindly walks inside. (Batman's lack of confidence in Robin's self-preservation skills is looking more and more reasonable by the minute.) He wanders through all the plants and eventually comes to a Turkish bath that's been converted into a glowing green pond covered with lily pads. Suddenly, a giant Venus flytrap opens up to reveal Poison Ivy.

Robin immediately asks her, "Is your thumb the only part of you that's green?" Ew. Here we go again with the plant-inspired genitalia references. She tells him to come find out for himself, so Robin eagerly steps across lily pads to get to her. He says he really, really wants her, but first he has to make sure she's serious about "turning over a new leaf." What new leaf? And when did she say she was turning one over? Oh, right. A clever pun. Never mind.

He jumps into her fly trap and tells her he needs a "sign". She delivers Genitalia Reference #2,354 by asking, "How about 'Slippery when Wet'?" Sure, put it on. Even a Bon Jovi record would be more entertaining than this movie. He asks what her plans are, but she wants him to give her some kissy-kissy first. Robin says she has to tell him the plans first, then it's the kissy-kissy.

Ivy takes the bait, explaining that Freeze is turning Bruce's telescope into a "giant freezing gun" and his goal is to "turn Gotham into a ice cube!" Ivy then asks for that kiss, and Robin, looking a lot like he's wearing lip gloss in this scene, is more than happy to oblige.

When they kiss, Ivy again keeps her eyes open with that totally creepy look. Yuck! Uma, don't *do* that! Even Ethan Hawke is losing his boner right now! Ivy then lies back and waits for Robin to die, but it seems he had a trick up his sleeve. He peels a plastic film off his lips, which I guess explains their glossy sheen, and declares that "Rubber lips are immune to your charms!" Are these those dental dams that I've been hearing so much about?



To quote Tim Meadows on *SNL*, "I'm getting a hard OFF."

Of course, since he's now taken off those rubber lips, Ivy could just grab him and kiss him again and pretty much be done with him, but instead she shoves him into the pond. Robin, for some reason, can't escape from this four-foot deep pool of water as Ivy makes her escape.

She gasps when she suddenly runs into Batman, who tells her that "You're not the only one who can set a trap, Venus!" She makes a dumb joke about her plants having a "crush" on him, setting the stage for vines to come out and wrap themselves around

Batman's ankles. They lift him up, once again giving us a good look at his exposed latex-encased behind as they hoist him to the ceiling and put the squeeze on him. Meanwhile, Ivy vamps for a while in a completely uninteresting way before finally deciding to leave.

Unfortunately, she's stopped when another dark figure comes crashing through a skylight. It turns out to be Barbara, now finally in her Batgirl costume. Batgirl cleverly tells Ivy that "You're about to become compost!" No... no, I can't do it. I can't touch that line. (This movie is just making things *way too easy!*)

The two have a brief fistfight and Ivy ends up on the floor. Wow, I guess those judo classes at "Oxbridge" really paid off. Batgirl declares that "Chicks like you give women a bad name!" Yeah, but movies like this give the human race a bad name.

More dull sparring breaks out between Ivy and Batgirl. We see Robin, for no apparent reason, still struggling to get out of the kiddie pool, surfacing momentarily until unknown forces drag him back down. And if you look close enough, you can see that the footage of Robin being pulled down into the water is obviously the same footage of him surfacing, only played in reverse. The dead giveaway is when water jumps out of the pond and *leaps up his face* as he goes back down.

Meanwhile, Batman is still on the ceiling struggling with vines, but he soon pulls out a mini Bat Buzzsaw. At the same time, Ivy has taken out a vine whip and used it to corner Batgirl. She then takes a moment to say, "As I told lady Fries when I pulled her plug, this is a one-woman show!" No, as a matter of fact, that is *not* what she told lady Fries when she pulled her plug. But let's just pretend.

They scuffle a little more until Ivy pulls a plant-themed switchblade out of her boot, which for some reason gives Batgirl extreme pause. "Comically", Ivy even stops to check her hair in the reflection in the blade. Ha ha! Two seconds later, Batgirl kicks it away. Wow! And it was such a formidable weapon, wasn't it?

At this point, Batgirl's *raison d'être* suddenly becomes clear. Obviously, it was so we wouldn't have to watch Batman and Robin beating on a woman during the "climactic" fight. I wouldn't particularly care to see that, either, but you'd think there'd be better ways to avoid it besides introducing an otherwise useless character.

Batgirl eventually knocks Ivy into her big Venus flytrap, and Ivy actually says "Curses!" [!!] before the flytrap closes on her. For some reason, this is made out to be a really awful thing, with Ivy flailing her legs around like crazy and screaming "NOOOOO!" I'm guessing this flytrap is supposed to be a grown-up version of the Audrey II-like plant that Ivy was showing off earlier, but the movie never makes this clear. If it is, why was she reclining inside of it when Robin showed up?

Whatever. Let's just finish this damn review before my head explodes.

So Batman uses his buzzsaw to finally free himself, and Robin finally figures out how to get out of the kiddie pool. They meet up and Robin tells Batman what Freeze's plan is, which Batman already knew about since he's got psychic powers or something. So, how much more pointless is Robin's stupid rubber lips scheme looking now?

They both turn and see Batgirl. When she says who she is, Batman says, "That's not awfully P.C.! What about Batperson, or Batwoman?" What about Fatgirl? Or Batcherub?

Batgirl cries out, "It's me, Barbara! I found the Batcave!" Robin quips that they'll have to

change the locks. Ho ho. Batman then jokes that they'll just have to kill her, but only after they've taken care of Freeze. I guess Ivy is now completely done away with [?], because all three of them run out without so much as shooting a glance back in her direction.

We cut to the Gotham Observatory, now completely frozen over. Freeze "hilariously" says, "Let's kick some ICE!" and begins manipulating what looks like a Microsoft Sidewinder joystick. He uses it to aim the telescope-cum-Giant Ice Cannon at the nearest skyscraper and blast away, freezing it solid.

He then starts to sweep the Cannon around the city and freeze everything in sight, including a train on its tracks, everyone on the street, and even an obnoxiously product-placed Taco Bell. Strangely enough, this makes the food they serve there a little warmer. For no reason, we then get a close-up shot of some guy frozen in a phone booth. A phone booth? When was the last time you saw one of these? Even the original *Superman* mocked the idea, and that was back in 1978.

Then we see a bulldog about to take a leak on a fire hydrant, when suddenly a blue light flashes and the dog gets literally frozen in midstream. Um, this is supposed to be funny, right? Then we see police cars speeding through the streets of Gotham, and up in the observatory, Freeze spots them approaching through his extraordinarily powerful magnifying lens which allows him to see individual cars on the street from 900 feet up.



Where was Schumacher going with this?

He blasts away, freezing the police. Now, a few seconds ago, we saw the Ice Cannon literally stop a train in its tracks, but this time the cop cars continue to slide forward until they crash through a miscellaneous store front. This causes the store to instantly explode into flames [??]. Freeze is delighted by this and continues blasting away.

We then pan down to the street and see three Bat Vehicles speeding down the ice. First, there's Batman in a customized version of the Batmobile that I'll call the Bat Zamboni. Then there's Robin in some kind of cross between a jet ski and a hovercraft. Finally, there's Batgirl, now wearing a pointy-eared cowl for some reason and riding a Batcycle.

Astoundingly, they're all wearing different costumes now. The ones they had on before were solid black, but these have miscellaneous silver trimming. Granted, it's definitely more interesting than solid black, but A) what's the point? B) when did they find the time to change into these? and C) why would they? We never find out.

Batman looks at a big clock face somewhere and sees that it happens to be eleven minutes to midnight. He tells the others through his Bat Radio that they have "less than

eleven minutes to thaw the city!" Suddenly, the Freezemobile crashes through some cars and heads right for our "heroes".

Inside the Freezemobile, a hockey-masked goon arbitrarily pushes buttons. This causes the spikes on the front to suddenly turn into missiles and head for the Bat Trio. There's lots of fireworks as our heroes dodge the missiles by... Well, to tell you the truth, they don't really do anything besides keep driving in a straight line. This is not really what you would call "exciting".

For no apparent reason, Batgirl (oddly looking much more svelte in this shot, by the way) goes flipping off her motorcycle. Robin then uses his deft driving skills to maneuver his Whatever Mobile to be right below where the wires are lowering her down. He then pulls up next to her Batcycle, which somehow is still continuing on without her [?], and Batgirl jumps back on it. Again, is there a point to any of this?

Batman pulls up in front of the Freezemobile, and as missiles sail past him, Hockey Mask Thug aims the Ice Cannon right at him. Batman says to his Bat Zamboni, "Shield," but you know he probably almost slipped up and said, "OnStar." This causes a Bat-shaped flap to rise up from somewhere and somehow deflect the freezing ray. Don't ask for a better explanation than that, because I really can't give you one.

Unsurprisingly, this shield then reflects the freezing beam right back on the Freezemobile. We then get a pointless shot of Hockey Mask Thug jumping out of the frozen vehicle and escaping to safety. Why? Who knows. I guess we're not supposed to see Batman deliberately kill somebody or something. I mean, it's not like he killed the Joker in cold blood in the first movie or anything.

The heroes continue on their way to the observatory, and Freeze sees them approach in his crystal ball. Okay, it's really a magnifying lens, but given what he can see with it, it might as well be a crystal ball. Freeze tells Bane to get rid of Robin and Batgirl, "but leave me the Bat!"

This next moment is so dumb I literally have to force myself to describe it. Our three heroes, now on foot, stop at the base of the observatory and shoot their Bat Ropes up and somehow hook onto the Gotham Observatory sign, which is 900 feet up in the air. Yes, that's right. All three of them are actually carrying ropes in their *belts* that are *900 feet long* [!!!].

They use the Bat Ropes to pull themselves up to the observatory. Come to think of it, this probably gets the movie over a lot quicker than if they had to find an elevator or something. So, actually, I'm fine with it now. They don't see Freeze, so Robin says there's "no sign of the snowman!" and Batgirl suggests that "maybe he melted." No, Alicia, that's just your career.

"No," Batman says, "He's just hibernating." [?] Batman, I think you lost the thread of "snowman" puns that they were tossing off. Work on that. For another dumb moment, they all shoot their Bat Ropes up to the ceiling of the observatory, and this is all filmed in a really grandiose fashion, with close-ups on every move and every Bat Rope as if it's the first time we're seeing them do it as opposed to the second time it's happened in the space of two minutes.

Batman pulls some mini Bat Heaters off his belt and puts them near the two scientists. They start thawing out, and then Batman gratuitously uses his Bat Rope to hoist himself over to the catwalk where Robin and Batgirl are. Does anybody just *walk* in Gotham

anymore?

They look at the controls of the telescope and realize they've only got a few minutes before it's too late to thaw out the rest of the city. Batman floats the dubious proposition that sunlight could thaw out the city, but Batgirl points out that it's midnight, you cretin, and we ain't at the damn North Pole.

"But," Robin says, "It's morning in the Congo!" [??] Say what? With the help of an instructional computer graphic, Batman and Robin explain to Batgirl that they can use the Deus Ex Machina Satellites to reflect sunlight around the globe to Gotham. Batgirl is suddenly an expert on how to target satellites (she's the computer science major, remember?) and she says she'll get right on it.

There's a problem, however. According to her, the Plot Devices are frozen. Actually, she says "targeting mirrors", but I have no idea what those are. Anyway, if they're frozen, this mean that the "thawing beam won't work!" Batman tells the two of them to thaw out the Plot Devices while he realigns the Deus Ex Machina Satellites.

Robin and Batgirl climb out to the end of the telescope and start shooting their Bat Lasers at some Whooziwhatsits. Batman, meanwhile, types on the weirdest computer keyboard I've ever seen. The letters are in a totally whacked out sequence, and it's definitely not a Dvorak. If anyone out there has ever seen a keyboard with a top row of "UWCARNYDLO", I'd love to know what it's called.

On the computer display, CGI wireframe models of satellites blink on and off. Then we cut to orbit [!!] and see a Deus Ex Machina Satellite fire a thruster and move into position. Christ, did they have money to waste on this movie or what? Meanwhile, Robin and Batgirl continue their monkey work, and a digital clock somewhere (maybe it's in the Congo) reminds us that midnight is quickly approaching.

Batman looks through the magnifying glass, and suddenly Dr. Freeze's face pops up behind it. "Tonight's forecast!" he says. "A freeeeeeeze is coming!" Although, with the magnifying power this thing has already displayed, we should only be able to see the bacteria on his tongue right now.



Wait, I think I see a blackhead.

Freeze throws Batman, sending him flying off in that wire-fu kind of way. Batman lands on the telescope, and in the process kindly knocks Robin and Batgirl off and sends the two plummeting to hopefully grisly deaths. Freeze uses his Sidewinder to try to shake Batman off while he disables the satellite realignment.

Robin and Batgirl are now standing in front of a green screen and flailing around, oops, I mean "falling to the ground". Robin aims his Robin Rope and hooks into an icicle somewhere. He then somehow finds a way to simultaneously fall and yet get enough tension on his Robin Rope to swing over to Batgirl. Whatever. Trust me, I'm as tired of pointing out implausibilities as you are of reading about them.

He grabs her and says, "I got you!" Unfortunately, the icicle breaks, and they continue on their three-hour plunge. Robin screams, but Batgirl just sort of moans in that same annoyed way as when the two of them were hanging from his ankle 600 feet above the pavement. Can you tell how so not interested Alicia Silverstone is in being here?

She fires off her own Bat Rope to connect with something more solid, then breathlessly says, "No... I got you!" Meanwhile, Batman is hanging onto the telescope as Freeze tries to shake him off. Freeze spots the thawed scientists, so he decides to swing around his massive death ray that can kill millions of people for the sole purpose of doing away with two scientists.



"You've got me? Who's got you?"

The Smug Asian Scientist sees this and screams out that "It's one of those days!" Yeah, we'll make sure to put that on your epitaph, you dope. The telescope crashes through their catwalk, and they grab onto the telescope for dear life. This makes Freeze very happy for unknown reasons.

Batman shoots a Bat Rope and hooks into something, somehow managing to fly off the telescope and come all the way around to kick Freeze in the chest. Batman plays with his joystick and re-aims the telescope, and we hear the two scientists on the telescope scream as they're lifted up.

Meanwhile, Robin and Batgirl land on an ice shelf that's apparently in the Fortress of Solitude. Suddenly, they hear a roar and find Bane is right behind them [?!?!]. I repeat, **?!?! Really**, I'm about to pop a blood vessel here. How in the *hell* did Bane know exactly where they would land?

Meanwhile, the most awkward fistfight in movie history is going on at the controls of the telescope, with Batman and Freeze trying to take swings at each other while barely moving in their big, clunky suits. They take turns alternatively enabling and disabling the satellite targeting, which for some reason prompts Smug Asian Scientist to yell, "Dirty fighter! Dirty fighter!" Huh?

Back to Robin and Batgirl, who are both pinned up against a wall by Bane. They finally take care of Bane once and for all by both kicking the tube out of his head, causing

radiator fluid to spurt out everywhere. Bane then collapses and "comically" morphs back down to a scrawny guy.

Okay, why didn't anybody kick this tube out before? When did Robin get the epiphany? This basically means that Bane was as easy to defeat as a household vacuum cleaner. Really menacing villain you got there, guys. Batgirl sees Bane change and smiles with an "ooh grody!" look on her face.

We cut back to the two scientists on the telescope as they yell out "Yay, Batman!" Right now, they're definitely the only ones yelling that. And thanks for distracting him, you morons. Batman and Freeze continue to pound on each other until Batman puts a Bat Heater on Freeze's chest and tells him that "The heat is on!" He then knocks Freeze senseless with a roundhouse punch [?]. Um, what was the reason for the heater, again?

Freeze falls off the platform, crashing into the Jewel-Encrusted Donut. This sends his Tiffany barbell doohickey flying off, where it crashes into some random machinery. Batman then fiddles with the computer until the display informs him that the "Sequence [is] locked". And the juice is loose. Up in space, we see a beam of sunlight reflect off a Dues Ex Machina Satellite and shine on Gotham City.

The sunlight hits the observatory and is reflected inside by the Plot Devices. We see Freeze lying on the ground, still alive, but suddenly he's Dracula and can't take all the sunlight. Meanwhile, the light streaming in has now turned the telescope from a Giant Ice Cannon to a Giant Cannon of Sunshine and Love.

An orange beam shoots out and starts thawing out the city and making people happy. Batman looks down at Freeze and tells him he's finished, but Freeze has another ace up his sleeve. Or, should I say, another ICE up his sleeve! See, I can do it too!

He pushes a button on his arm and the mood crystals Bane was laying down earlier start blowing up real good. Freeze falls off the Jewel-Encrusted Donut and hits the ground, which sends him into extreme pain. We then see the telescope start to sink through the floor, and Freeze tells Batman to "Freeze in hell!" as everything collapses around them.

The telescope then breaks through the observatory wall and starts plummeting down. Batman, not content to just let those two irritating scientists hit the ground along with it, jumps on and follows them down.

Robin (not Quivers) and Batgirl step out on their Fortress of Solitude ice shelf just in time to see the telescope hurtling right at the camera. Batgirl asks what they should do now. "Pray," Robin says. No, don't bother. I've been doing it for the last ninety minutes, and trust me, *it doesn't work*.

We see Batman and the scientists on the telescope in the middle of their ten-hour plunge. Batman fires off a Mega Platinum Super-Duper Bat Rope™ and tells the scientists to grab his belt. And then he tells them to pull his finger.

The Mega Platinum Super-Duper Bat Rope™ connects with something and Batman pulls them off just moments before the telescope hits the ground and goes up in a giant ball of flame [?]. Please don't ask me what could be inside of a telescope that would cause it to be this combustible.

Batman sets the scientists down on a ledge, then pulls himself back up towards the observatory. They call out, "Thank you, Batman!" as he flies away. Yeah, thanks for just leaving us on the damn telescope while you were aiming it. Batman swoops past Robin

and Batgirl and says, "Need a ride?" They both grab onto him, and despite Batgirl's weight, Batman pulls all three of them back up to the observatory.

When they get there, it's almost midnight and the telescope is gone, so it seems like there's no way to thaw the city now. Batman says the Dues Ex Machina Satellites could be positioned to do it, but it would "take a computer genius!"

Accordingly, Batgirl gets on the case, but Robin butts in and points out that the computer is now flipped over and that "we're gonna have to do this upside down!" Batgirl sneers, "Men! Everything the hard way!" They get the computer display up and running again, but it's right side up. Um, okay. So the stupid lines don't match the props, yet they left them in anyway. Whatever.

Robin tells her that she's "Pretty good at this, little girl!" to which Batgirl retorts, "Watch and learn, little boy!" I'm sure there's a parallel universe somewhere where this passes for creative banter. She then dinks around with the computer and two seconds later has it all done. We watch as all the Dues Ex Machina Satellites in orbit reflect beams of sunlight down to Gotham.

Eventually, all the people are thawed, and we watch them just shake off the slush and move on. No frostbite, no hypothermia, not even trench foot. Damn Comic Book Movie.

Then we see the guy in the phone booth get thawed out. Oh, thank God. I can now sleep easy knowing that Phone Booth Guy survived. Then we see the cops all thawed out, but for some reason they still have really fake-looking icicles on their car doors. The icicles even bounce back and forth like rubber [!] as one cop gets out.

We then see one guy get thawed out who was apparently in the middle of buying something from a street vendor. The guy doesn't know what just happened, but the newly thawed street vendor just continues to grab at his money. Hilarious! And the money-grubbing street vendor is Asian, too! Comedy!



This is not at *all* an ethnic stereotype.

Then we see the bulldog thaw out and just walk off [?]. Okay, I give up. Was this supposed to be funny? *True* comedy would have been Batman putting the frozen dog next to Freeze so that it ended up taking a leak on his head as soon as it thawed out. Now *that* would have been a hundred times more hilarious than anything in this movie.

Our three heroes smile upon this golden tableau for a while, and then Batman goes over to the subdued Freeze. He tells him he's going back to Arkham, but Freeze asks to be killed the way Batman killed his wife. Batman says he didn't kill Nora Fries, and as proof,

he pulls out a mini Bat TV showing Ivy saying her line about pulling the plug on lady Fries. Oddly, it's from the same angle that we saw it happen, and not from way up above, which is where Batman was when she said it. Whatever. Comic Book Movie. *Et cetera*.

Upon seeing this, Freeze howls in anger, and poor Arnie is actually forced to act here. It's not a pretty picture. However, Batman reveals that they conveniently saved his wife and she's still "frozen, alive".



I repeat: It's not a pretty picture.

"But vengeance isn't power," Batman lectures. "Anyone can take a life. But to give life, that's true power!" And knowing is half the battle! Batman pleads to Freeze's inner scientist, calling him "Victor" and asking for the cure to MacGregor's Syndrome Stage 1. Batman fronts like he's just looking to save the lives of random MacGregor's sufferers, but we know he's just trying to hook up his boy Alfred.

In response, Freeze opens up a compartment in the arm of his suit and pulls out two blue, glowing test tubes. So, the Day-Glo Skulls in Ivy's hideout were drinking the cure for MacGregor's? "Tek two uff dese," Freeze says, "An cawl meh inneh mohning!" Batman takes the serum and promises to have Nora Fries moved to Arkham so Freeze can continue his "research" there. Geez, first we let prisoners have HBO, now this?

We then cut to Bruce connecting one of the blue test tubes to Alfred's IV drip. Please don't ask me how. Then a blue light is reflected right into Alfred face, which is meant to represent him being "cured", I guess. Bruce tells Dick and Barbara that all they can do now is wait. For a couple of scenes, at least.

Back at Arkham, we find Poison Ivy, now the Prison Bitch all done up in black and white stripes as she picks the petals off a flower. She recites "He loves me, he loves me not," then eats a petal [?] and says, "He loves me..."

Freeze's voice suddenly booms, "Not!" In the shadows, he lights up his cryo-suit, which does come close to actually looking menacing. Alas, too little, too late. He tells her that he's now her cellmate. Wow! A co-ed jail! I've always thought that would be a great idea. But why did they let him keep his suit this time?

He says, "I've come to make your life a living hell!" He's going to keep trying to act, I guess. Ivy's face glows blue as she grows terrified. Or sleepy. At this point it could go either way, really.

It's dawn the next day at Wayne Manor, and we see that Bruce has been waiting up all night. Alfred walks in and clears his throat, and Dick and Barbara instantly wake up and

run to him. Alfred finally gets his own opportunity to make a dumb wisecrack, pretending to be grumpy and saying something about how the place is just a big mess now. Is Alfred always this OCD, or what? Come to think of it, maybe him having MacGregor's wasn't so bad after all.



"In my day, we didn't have any of this new fangled freezing technology!
And we *liked* it!"

He smiles and they all embrace, except for Bruce, who stands near Dick and pats him on the back. See, it's time for Bruce and Dick to have a heart to heart and resolve their own stupid little subplot.

Dick asks why Bruce didn't try to save him when he fell off the telescope. Bruce says, "I figured you could handle it." Aw, isn't this touching? Or, at least, more touching than what Bruce is really thinking, which is "I hoped you would die a horrible death." Wait, that's what *I'm* thinking. Sorry.

"Sometimes," Bruce sermonizes, "Counting on someone else is the only way to win." And if you're not careful, you might learn something before we're done! Barbara interrupts, pointing out that she's the one who "kicked Ivy's botanical butt!". She then proceeds to repeat "That was me!" over and over again in a really irritating, smug voice.

Bruce says he's shipping her back to "Oxbridge", but Dick tells him he's "never gonna win this argument!" Which I guess means they're stuck with her now. Barbara offers forth a hand and says, "Partners?" They do a three-handed handshake and Dick and Bruce both say, "Partners." Alfred then says that "We're going to need a bigger cave!" Geez, would people stop picking on Alicia Silverstone's weight already?

Since even a retard can tell you this is a weak ending for a supposed action movie, we get one final useless shot of their three silhouettes running towards the camera with capes flapping, and the Bat Signal behind them. Fade to black.

In closing, I'd just like to point out that less than a year after audiences heard Uma Thurman's Poison Ivy voice, the FDA approved Viagra to treat male impotence. Coincidence?

(Also, please note that at no time in this review did I belittle the Oscar that Akiva "Is your thumb the only part of you that's green?" Goldsman won for his *A Beautiful Mind* screenplay. This was a laudible accomplishment, and who knows, one day he might even get a lifetime achievement award from the Academy. Just like Dino De Laurentiis.)





Back to the booth!